Man wants court's HR to produce docs on his sex assault complaint. PAGE 5
The Marianas Experience highlights indigenous culture. PAGE 9

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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DPW assesses CUC $6.9M for 110 alleged violations

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As of June 30, 2023, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. owes the CNMI government $6.9 million in outstanding civil fees and civil penalties assessed by the Department of Public Works for about 110 alleged violations that are mainly related to unpermitted road cutting work.

See DPW on Page 4

Medicaid's capped funding could lead to $12M shortfall for CHCC

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's Medicaid program's capped funding is expected to result in a whopping $12-million shortfall for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. by the end of the fiscal year.

CHCC recently went be-

See MEDICAID on Page 4

'Tourists want to see Tinian, Rota events, but…'

» Biggest challenge is frequent air services, events information is slow

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Korean and Japanese tourists do want to visit Tinian and Rota, but the biggest barrier to that is the lack of a frequent, reliable, and affordable air service, according to Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher Attao Concepcion.

In his presentation about MVA'S budget for fiscal year

See TOURISTS on Page 4

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Dignitaries and officials break ground on the Northern Marianas College's upcoming Student Center yesterday during a groundbreaking ceremony at the college's As Terlaje campus on Saipan.

NMC Student Center project gets going

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

A crowd of over 500 supporters, business partners, government agencies, students and community members joined Northern Marianas College staff and the PROA Tribe yesterday to break ground for NMC's upcoming state-of-the-art Student Center at the school's campus in As Terlaje.

To be located on the most prominent knoll of the hilltop college, the NMC Student Center will feature a

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'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

57

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Bank of Hawai'i is accepting applications for its Small Business revitalization grant program.
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
There could be a new contender for heaviest animal to have ever lived—an ancient giant whale.
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LIFE & STYLE
Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife, Sophie, are separating after 18 years.
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For inquiries about veterinary services please reach out to Saipan Humane Society at info@saipanhumanesociety.org or WhatsApp +1 (670) 838-7387.

Saipan Tribune *is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, founder of the Saipan Humane Society, in collaboration with the SMO Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!*

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Mendiola: Not much appetite for tax hike among lawmakers

» Villagomez: Any revenue generating bill has to be separate from budget bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Dennis James C. Mendiola (R-Rota) believes that not too many representatives or senators are interested in increasing taxes at this time.

Mendiola

"So that's the challenge here. I just wanted to point that out," said Mendiola during the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee meeting with Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita and Office of Management and Budget special assistant Virginia Villagomez yesterday.

That effectively plants huge question mark on Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' proposed budget for fiscal year 2024, since it includes a proposal to increase the Business Gross Revenue Tax beginning in the second quarter of fiscal year 2024 in order to raise an additional revenue of $9.1 million.

The proposal may also be scuttled via a technicality. In response to Sen. Paul A. Manglona's (Ind-Rota) question, Senate legal counsel Antonette Villagomez said that any revenue generating bill has to be separate from the budget bill.

Norita said they're estimating to raise around $1 million to $3 million revenue for fiscal year 2024 on a proposed 3% construction tax. Villagomez said the House of Representatives would have to introduce a separate bill to establish a construction tax as it cannot be added into the budget.

When asked if lawmakers can choose to suspend any earmarks that will have the least detrimental effect and allow them to pass a balanced budget, Norita said she can't say which one because it's like asking "which is more important in order to walk well—the left leg or right leg?"

Villagomez

"And so again that's why we proposed just for those critical programs to be restored," Norita said, referring to earmarks.

The secretary said they realized that on an annual basis, even the $116 million budget level of the current fiscal year is not enough to sustain a whole year's worth of personnel and other programs.

She said it was this that drove them to look into how the government can increase revenue and that is primarily through taxes.

"Although no one wants to increases taxes at this point, I believe we need to and we just have to be mindful of the business community's input," Norita said, while adding that, "of course nobody wants the tax."

Norita said that, when looking at how to raise revenues through taxes, it spreads the burden among the entire community.

She said if they try to handle it on the expenditure side, the burden will be on just a few number of people, which most likely will be just the government employees within the Executive Branch, or whatever other programs will be cut on the expenditure side.

"But at this point, we took all of those into consideration in preparing the budget and we believe that this was the best approach," Norita said.

The committee hearing was presided by Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota).

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Hawaii doesn't want firearms on its beaches. The state's latest gun control law goes before a judge

HONOLULU (AP)—A legal battle over whether Hawaii can continue enforcing a new law banning firearms on its world-famous beaches went before a U.S. judge, who said Friday she would rule as soon as possible but didn't give a specific date.

The state's latest gun control measure landed in court because of a lawsuit by three Maui residents who want to carry guns on beaches and other places deemed sensitive by the law, which took effect this month and involves a misdemeanor offense.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs, Jason and Alison Wolford and Atom Kasprzycki, say they especially want to protect themselves at isolated beaches where they might be fishing or going for a walk rather than sunbathing or swimming.

If U.S. District Judge Leslie Kobayashi grants the temporary restraining order they seek, the law would be blocked on an emergency basis as the lawsuit plays out. After hearing from attorneys during Friday's hearing, which focused on technical and historical legal questions, Kobayashi said she would consider the matter and then issue a written order.

In a court filing, the state said the law is crucial not only for public safety but for the economy. Hawaii's beaches "are the most popular recreational tourist activity" and a "central pillar" of a $19 billion tourism industry, the state said.

Attorneys for the state also say beaches need to be gun-free because they host family and cultural gatherings.

The lawsuit alleges that Hawaii, which has long had some of the strictest gun laws in the nation and the lowest rates of gun violence, is going too far with a wide-ranging ban on locations that also include bank parking lots and restaurants serving alcohol.

In an indication of how vigorously Hawaii is defend-

See HAWAII on Page 4

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DPW responds to Marpi fire

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Works responded to a fire at the Marpi Landfill earlier this week.

According to an incident report from the Department of Public Works, a fire broke out at the Marpi Landfill tipping floor last Monday, but DPW's Solid Waste Management personnel managed to put the fire out before it could spread.

The incident report acquired from the office of DPW Secretary Ray Yumul states that the DPW office received a call from Solid Waste employee Makaela Borja regarding a fire incident at the Marpi Landfill last Monday, July 31.

Borja reported that a fire broke out at the landfill tipping floor but it was later controlled by Marpi site employees who dumped sand and dirt on the fire, which resulted in the fire being extinguished.

DPW determined that the fire was presumed to be a concealed hot load that was brought to the tipping floor and disposed into a bin container. The origin of the hot load was never determined.

Essentially a hot load is considered trash that can easily catch on fire or could possibly combust if left under the heat. These loads of trash are required to be visually inspected prior to discharging them into a bin within a landfill.

"The smoke arose and scale house attendant Lee Kaipat was informed by tipping floor attendant Craig Cepeda. The site contractor was notified, and the fire was immediately extinguished," the report said.

There were no injuries from the incident.

DPW

From page 1

This was learned based a more-than-six-inch thick sheaf of documents that George C. Sablan, acting director for DPW Technical Services Division, sent CUC acting executive director Betty Terlaje last Friday, where he informed her about the fees and penalties totaling $6,994,000. He told her the fines and penalties are payable to the CNMI Treasury.

CUC received DPW's letter last Wednesday.

When asked for comments yesterday, Telaje said she has had no chance yet to look at DPW's documents.

Sablan said in his letter that, as part of their compliance review of all permitted applications on file, DPW has determined that the restoration of road cutting work of asphalt pavement has not been completed in accordance with Public Law 5-41. Sablan said these road-cutting and trenching activities on CNMI roadways were performed by CUC's Water Division to fix emergency water leak repairs and water connection underground.

Citing DPW's notice of violation dated Sept. 21, 2022, the acting director said these road-cutting and trenching activities were performed without required permits and permit applications.

He said a total of 110 applications have been approved after CUC was issued a notice of violation, pending restoration of asphalt pavement throughout Saipan.

Sablan cited several legal authorities that form the basis for DPW's imposed fines.

Last April 12, DPW Secretary Ray N. Yumul issued a final notification to CUC over its alleged repeated violations of not restoring roads that it had cut up or dug up for its projects. Yumul said the violations create significant safety concerns for the public.

Last April 19, then-acting CUC executive director Dallas M. Peavey Jr. informed Yumul that they're working to repair and replace roads that were damaged by CUC projects.

Peavey said 16% of CUC road repairs are caused by DPW cutting into and/or through CUC water and sewer piping.

NMC

From page 1

building that will be three stories high, with approximately 45,000 square feet of enclosed space with a double-height multi-purpose hall, student services, dining, library, bookstore, office spaces, a performance lawn—"and it is just the beginning," according to NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero in his welcoming remarks yesterday.

"Today is a new day, not just for NMC, but for the CNMI. The construction that begins today will usher in a new wave of economic activity that will revive our economy and renew our hope in the future," he added.

Many of yesterday's main speakers recalled the circumstances that led to yesterday's groundbreaking. Deleon Guerrero said the groundbreaking shows the resilience of NMC's staff and their dedication to students, coming on the heels of Typhoon Soudelor in 2016 and Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018, which destroyed 18 of the 25 campus buildings.

"But we could not get here on our own. While the PROA Tribe rowed and sailed, we had many people many partners that served as the wind in our sails, the waves on the ocean, and the currents in the sea…" he said.

The NMC Student Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Supplemental funds are also provided by the Office of Insular Affairs-Capital Improvement Projects.

Gov. Arnold I Palacios echoed Deleon Guerrero's sentiments applauded all who have invested in this project. "…This project means so much not only for the college, but for the entire community. This building dedicated to our students is a symbol of our islands resiliency and comeback story," he said.

U.S Education Secretary Miguel Cardona made a virtual appearance via a pre-recorded greeting, where he congratulated the NMC team "…We've been proud to be your partner in recovery," he said. "While your campus may have been torn apart by Super Typhoon Yutu, your desire to help your students and the island community remain stronger than ever. …It's my hope that this new Student Center not only provides support for students in years to come but also serves as a monument to your resilience, and what I know will be a new era of success for the entire community."

The U.S. Department of Education provided over $20 million for the project, playing a major part in funding the center and contributing a bulk of the funding.

For the project, TRMA handled the building design, and as construction begins, Core Tech will be the main contractor.

TOURISTS

From page 1

2024 before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee last week, Concepcion also underscored the need for event organizers on the two islands to commit much earlier to holding their events on specific dates, so that MVA can properly market them and make them more accessible to visitors. Giving tourists short notice on when an event is going to happen on Tinian or Rota is going to limit the number of visitors who could attend them, Concepcion said.

In the case of air services, he pointed out that, as an example, Star Marianas states on their website that, once their flight is full, a person can no longer purchase tickets online.

"And visitors are not aware that you can physically go to the airport or call them up to make a reservation," said Concepcion, adding that, without these improvements, visitor volume on Rota and Tinian will always remain a little bit low.

Also, the reality is that seven seats per flight at three flights a day to Rota is very challenging for the market to increase arrivals, he said.

The good thing, Concepcion said, is that "we know there's interest [for tourists to visit Tinian or Rota]. That's a good thing," adding that MVA's outdoor ads and digital ads in Korea increased traffic to the MVA's website by almost 2,000%.

In terms of promoting Tinian and Rota events, Concepcion said they are in active communication with the two islands' mayor's offices and they are helping them out, giving them out their best guidance for their events.

"We're creating layouts to promote their events, even in foreign languages. We want to drive traffic there from our source markets of Japan, Korea, and elsewhere," he said.

Concepcion said they need event organizers to commit to the dates and times at least three months in advance so that MVA could get that information to Korea and Japan and they will have time to promote it.

Concepcion said he, MVA acting board chair Gloria Cavanagh, and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios recently visited Korea and Japan, and everyone told them that they are quite interested in bringing visitors to these events on Tinian and Rota, but the information about them usually comes out slowly.

He said they are working closely with mayor's offices to speed things up.

"We're highlighting each island's appeal that works," the managing director said.

Concepcion said they want to bring back KONQER if possible, as well as Ironman 70.3, but that it is really dependent on whether or not they get adequate funding.

KONQER is a multi-country obstacle course circuit, while Ironman 70.3 is one of a series of long-distance triathlon races.

HAWAII

From page 3

ing the law, the state attorney general's office has brought in help from outside attorneys like Neal Katyal, a Washington, D.C., corporate attorney and former acting U.S. solicitor general.

They are defending Hawaii pro bono—without any payment in attorneys' fees, the state attorney general's office said.

Katyal, who didn't participate in Friday's video hearing, has helped Hawaii on other cases, including a fight against former President Donald Trump's travel ban on citizens from several mostly Muslim countries.

Hawaii is still getting used to allowing residents to carry firearms in public after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year expanded gun rights nationwide, finding that people have a right to carry for self-defense.

The decision prompted the state to retool its laws, with Democratic Gov. Josh Green signing legislation in early June allowing more people to get concealed carry permits but banning guns in a wide range of places, including beaches, hospitals, stadiums, bars serving alcohol and movie theaters.

MEDICAID

From page 1

fore the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs' budget hearing to inform them of the financial struggles they are currently facing and will continue to face if Medicaid does not get the much-needed funding.

In a statement to the *Saipan Tribune*, CHCC says the shortfall has resulted in a situation where CHCC anticipates not receiving payment for the services rendered, which has placed a strain on its resources and financial stability.

"The CNMI's economic stability is currently unstable, which means more Medicaid-qualified applicants and enrollees. If Medicaid is not able to pay, it strains program participants to access care. Nonetheless, CHCC continues to serve an insured population whose insurance does not fully cover the cost of care, adding further pressure," CHCC said in its statement.

During the Senate budget hearing, CHCC CEO Esther Muña asked the Senate to consider two things when considering their budget request; CHCC's workforce and the organization's ability to continue financing health care for members of the community who cannot afford it. Muña strongly emphasized the latter.

Aside from going before the Senate during a budget hearing, *Saipan Tribune* learned that Muña also shared the issue with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and has also reached out to Medicaid, urging them to help CHCC avoid detrimental issues that could put its Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services certification at risk as it would cost CHCC critical healthcare workers.

"CHCC is hopeful of the passage of H.R.949 by [Delegate] Gregorio Kilili Sablan (D-MP), which would amend Title XI of the Social Security Act to eliminate the general Medicaid funding limitations for U.S. territories. This provides the opportunity to no longer limit some of the services of patients under the program. However, there has been no movement in the U.S. Congress," CHCC said in a statement.

Medicaid is a joint federal-state program that finances medical services for low-income individuals. However, U.S. territories like the CNMI operate Medicaid programs under rules that differ from those applicable to the 50 states.

For example, the CNMI's Medicaid program operates under the Section 1902(j) waiver authority. Under this rule, the Medicaid requirements that may not be waived are the federal matching rate; the annual federal capped funding; and the requirement that Medicaid payments are for services otherwise coverable.

In a previous interview with Muña, she said that, with capped funding, it is difficult for Medicaid to consider future expansion of services, even though individuals will lose access to critical health care.

"I hope the capped funding is removed soon so there is a discussion to expand medical services and bring health initiatives to the CNMI," she said.

IN THE RAPE CASE AGAINST SUPERIOR COURT LAW CLERK

Man wants court's HR to produce docs on his sex assault complaint

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The ongoing "he-said, she-said" rape case involving a Superior Court law clerk has resulted in a subpoena issued against the Superior Court's Human Resources Office to produce documentation supporting his claims of sexual assault.

William Abraczinskas, a law clerk for Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo, has subpoenaed the CNMI Superior Court's HRO to ask it to produce all documentation related to the complaint that he had filed in Superior Court.

Abraczinskas is being accused of sexually assaulting his co-worker but he claims he was the one who was sexually assaulted and that he had filed a complaint with his HR prior to the rape complaint being filed against him. Specifically, Abraczinskas wants the Superior Court to produce all investigation reports related to the complaint that he made, including interviews of him by the court's chief marshal and interviews conducted with other Superior Court employees.

In addition, Abraczinskas wants the court to turn over the draft email he wrote and stored in a computer that he used while working at the Superior Court related to the complaint he filed.

The subpoena also requested the court's HRO to produce all documentation regarding the complaint filed against him by his co-worker alleging that he sexually assaulted her.

The Superior Court's HRO must produce and turn over all the requested documentation and material to the Public Defender's Office by today, Aug. 4.

Abraczinskas, 34, is facing charges of sexual assault in the first degree, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

The defendant has numerous pending motions in relation to this case, including a petition with the Supreme Court to disqualify all sitting Superior Court judges from hearing his case.

According to court documents, the victim made a walk-in complaint against Abraczinkas last May 26 at the Department of Public Safety's headquarters, alleging that he had sexually assaulted her at his apartment.

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NMI employers reminded of Q2 reporting deadline

The CNMI Department of Labor is reminding all private sector employers in the Commonwealth about the deadline to submit required reports covering the second quarter of the year.

In a notice yesterday, the department cited the authority vested upon it by the Employment Rules and Regulations of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code to require the submission of such mandated reports.

Failure or refusal to comply will result in the department to issue a notice of violation to the employer, which may result in fines and other sanctions following a due process hearing in the Administrative Hearing Office.

DOL said that all eligible private sector employers operating in the Commonwealth are required to report the following:

1. Census of Employment

■ NMIAC § 80-20.1-505 (b): Each business employer shall report quarterly, as of the last day of the calendar quarter, and within the time limits for filing the business gross receipts tax return, the number and classification of employees for whom wages were paid during the quarter.

■ NMIAC § 80-20.1-505 (d): Census reports shall be made on the form provided by the department and filed according to the instructions on the form. The form provided by the department to file census reports is called the "Total Workforce Listing" form.

2. Workforce Plan

■ NMIAC § 80-20.1-510 (b): A workforce plan shall identify specific positions currently occupied by nonimmigrant aliens. The plan shall include a timetable for accomplishing the replacement of nonimmigrant aliens with qualified citizens, CNMI permanent residents, and U.S. permanent residents until the workforce participation objective is met.

■ NMIAC § 80-20.1-510 (c): Every employer who employs nonimmigrant aliens, unless exempted, is required to have on file with the Department, a written, current plan. A workforce plan is current if it has been updated and filed within the past 12 months.

Forms and instructional manuals to complete the Census of Employment (Total Workforce Listing) and Workforce Plan are available online at www.marianaslabor.net. Click on "Forms & Publications", then download the selected document and/or manual.

Completed forms (Excel format only) may be submitted to the department via email at documents@marianaslabor.net.

Deadlines

Submission deadlines for the Total Workforce Listing are as follows:

■ 1st Quarter (January – March), due on April 30

■ 2nd Quarter (April – June), due on July 31

■ 3rd Quarter (July – September), due on Oct. 31

■ 4th Quarter (October - December), due on Jan. 31

ATTENTION: The Total Workforce Listing for the 2nd quarter of 2023 was due on July 31, 2023. Email completed forms to documents@marianaslabor.net (Excel format only). You may also fax them to (670) 664-3197 or deliver them to the Division of Employment Services, building #1334, on Capital Hill. Online submissions are preferable.

Rota employers must email the Total Workforce Listing and Workforce Plan to documents@marianaslabor.net and dolrota@gmail.com, or hand-deliver completed forms to the Rota DOL field office at Old Rota High School Campus, Liyo Village.

Tinian employers must email the Total Workforce Listing and Workforce Plan to documents@marianaslabor.net and tinianlabordepartment@gmail.com or hand-deliver completed forms to the Tinian DOL field office at Edu's Plaza, first floor, San Jose Village.

For further information, call the Department of Labor at (670) 664-3196 or (670) 322-9935. ***(DOL)***

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SMUCKER'S GOOBER GRAPE 18oz $3.99 ea.

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U.S. GRAPES RED SEEDLESS / LB $2.89/lb.

U.S. EGGS X-LARGE WH 1DZ $2.59/dz.

U.S. BLUEBERRIES 6oz $5.99/pk.

U.S. CHERRY BING RED/LB $5.99/lb.

SHOP VALUE PAPER TOWEL 1BR $1.19 ea.

US CHOICE FLAP MEAT SKIRT STEAK $18.29/lb.

US FROZEN PORK HOCK LARGE / LB $1.99/lb.

FROZEN SUNLAND CHICKEN WINGS 25P TRAY PACK $4.69/lb.

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AMERICAN FINEST SLICED CHEESE 9.6oz $1.89

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OIA awards $3.6M to help control spread of brown tree snakes

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs announced yesterday that $3,648,875 for the Brown Tree Snake Control Program in fiscal year 2023 has been distributed among federal, territorial, and state partners in the ongoing fight to control the brown tree snakes in Guam and to prevent them from spreading throughout the Western Pacific, including Hawai'i.

"The partnering efforts to control the brown tree snake have been successful in mitigating its impact on Guam and preventing its spread to the Northern Mariana Islands and Hawai'i," said assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. "The recent discoveries of the brown tree snake on board a plane and cargo ship only serve as an important reminder that we must continue to be vigilant in ongoing efforts to control, mitigate and eradicate the brown tree snake where possible."

OIA is distributing the fiscal year 2023 funding to the following partners to support efforts to fight the brown tree snake:

■ $1,400,184 - U.S. Department of Agriculture - APHIS Wildlife Services for the Guam BTS Interdiction Program.

■ $811,160 - USGS Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center for rapid-response activities and related BTS research.

■ $450,000 - CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources for the CNMI BTS Interdiction Program.

■ $425,416 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office to provide regional and national program coordination.

■ $400,000 - Hawai'i Department of Agriculture for the Hawai'i Detector Dog and BTS Interdiction Program.

■ $69,915 - Guam Power Authority for the BTS Impact Research and Discovery Project.

■ $50,876 - Guam Department of Agriculture, Aquatic and Wildlife Resources for the Kontra I Kulepbla, Challenge the Snake Project!

■ $41,324 - USDA - APHIS National Wildlife Research Center on research for additional non-canine detectors.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Since its accidental introduction in Guam after World War II and without natural predators on-island, the brown tree snake has caused the drastic decline of native bird populations.

Since its accidental introduction in Guam after World War II and without natural predators on-island, the brown tree snake has caused the drastic decline of native bird populations, causing cascading ecological consequences that threaten forest resiliency and other natural systems on the island.

Every year, the brown tree snake cause ground faults and short circuits that result in power outages estimated at $4.5 million in annual losses to Guam's economy, while toxins from brown tree snake bites also present health and safety concerns for infants and young children.

The Interior Department works closely with federal, state, and territorial partners to mitigate the brown tree snake threat in Guam and prevent the spread of this invasive species to the Northern Mariana Islands, the State of Hawai'i, and other neighboring islands such as Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands.

Thousands of brown tree snake are caught and removed every year from the civilian air and seaport in Guam, which is the main U.S. transportation hub in the Western Pacific, thus preventing the snake's spread.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Wildlife Research Center estimates that the accidental introduction of brown tree snake to Hawai'i could result in between $593 million and $2.14 billion in annual economic damage. ***(DOI)***

ROBERT T. TORRES (F0197)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758 CK, Saipan MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-7859
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Defendant Lan Lan Wang

CHARITY HODSON (F0487)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607, Saipan MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Co-Counsel for Defendant Lan Lan Wang

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WON BAE SHON, Plaintiff, vs. HEE JONG CHOO, SOO WOAN JUN, YAN HUA LI, JING ZHU SUN, LAN LAN WANG, and DOES One to Five, Defendants.	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 15-0018** **SUMMONS**

TO CROSSCLAIM DEFENDANT SOO WOAN JUN:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to DEFENDANT LAN LAN WANG'S COUNTERCLAIM AGAINST WON BAE SHON AND CROSSCLAIM AGAINST SOO WOAN JUN ("the Complaint"), a copy of which is given to you herewith, within Twenty-One (21) Days after service of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to **Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, 5960 Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. Box 500730**, Saipan, or soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susupe Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your Attorney and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated this 14th day of March, 2023.

/s/
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB23-CHCC/CGC-988 CRISIS-017

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 14, 2023 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

NOTICE

On August 1, 2023, Banes Horey Berman & Miller, LLC, is moving to Garapan, a block and a half south of American Memorial Park. Our new location is:

First Floor, Macaranas Building
4165 Beach Road, Garapan

The entrance is marked with a white arrow in the picture below:

Our mailing address, telephone and email remain the same.

BANES HOREY BERMAN & MILLER, LLC
P.O. Box 501969
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: (670) 234-5684
Email: cnmi@pacificlawyers.law

Broadband office seeks input on Rota today

The Broadband Policy & Development Office under the Office of the Governor, or BPD, will be holding a stakeholder engagement meeting on the island of Rota today, Aug. 4, from 2pm to 4pm at the Department of Commerce conference room.

The BPD, through the CNMI Office of the Governor, has been established with financial support and guidance for the National Telecommunications & Information Administration's Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment, or BEAD, Program. The BPD is tasked with implementing broadband deployment, equity planning, and exploring implementation opportunities. At present, the BPD is currently crafting the BEAD five-year action plan. During this process, the BPD is reaching out to stakeholders for comments, insight, and collaboration. Each week a virtual meeting is held to discuss different facets of the action plan. This week the focus will be primarily on the broadband internet needs of the island of Rota.

If on Rota, join us at the in-person meeting. If anyone would like to attend virtually, this is the link to the meeting: https://meet.google.com/cvc-oxyy-umd . The virtual meeting is every Friday at 3pm. ***(PR)***

Tiffany Yokoyama-Lizama obtains degree

FAIRBANKS, Alaska—A daughter of the CNMI was one of those who was honored during the University of Alaska Fairbanks' 101st commencement ceremony last May 6 at the Carlson Center in Fairbanks.

As a member of the Class of 2023, Tiffany Yokoyama-Lizama of Saipan received a bachelor of arts degree in Social Work.

The university's first commencement took place in 1923 when the sole graduate, John Sexton Shanly, received a bachelor's degree in agriculture. This year, UAF conferred approximately 1,029 degrees on 956 students. Some students received more than one degree. The ceremony included graduates from summer and fall 2022 and spring 2023. ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Kang Corporation

POSITION: Procurement Specialist

NUMBER OF OPENINGS: 1

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Buy merchandise, equipment, spare parts, or commodities for resale to consumers at the wholesale or retail level, including both durable and nondurable goods; Evaluate and negotiate contracts with vendors; Track inventory and restocks of merchandise, equipment, spare parts, or commodities; Stay up-to-date on industry trends and new products; Compare available items or materials with industry trends to determine appropriate pricing; Research and find suppliers that produce quality items within the business' budget; Gather and prepare documents, like quotes, proposals, and purchase terms and conditions from suppliers for management review; Act as the supplier's main points of contact and will answer any questions or address concerns the supplier has; Analyze past buying trends, sales records, price, and quality of merchandise to determine value and yield; Select, order, and authorize payment for merchandise according to contractual agreements; May conduct meetings with sales personnel and introduce new products; May negotiate contracts; Coordinate route movement of incoming and outgoing freight cargo; Coordinate import and export operations of the company while following all legal requirements and regulations related to the import and export of goods, materials, or products from one country to another.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION: Must have at least a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, International Trade Studies, or a related field.

EXPERIENCE: Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as an International Trader or Sales Manager or related field.

OTHER SPECIAL SKILLS OR REQUIREMENTS: Must have good communication skills; Must have the ability to manage multiple projects or undertakings at one time; Must have skills in effectively negotiating vendor contracts; and Must have strong problem-solving skills.

JOB SITE: Amara Pi, Pale Arnold Road, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

HOW TO APPLY: If interested, please submit or mail application and comprehensive resume, with supporting credentials to: KANG HEE KIM, President, KANG CORPORATION

Office Address: Amara Pi, Pale Arnold Road, Saipan,
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 503053, Saipan, MP 96950
Email Address: kangparts@hotmail.com
Telephone Number: Tel. 1 (670) 235-9369

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of Guarndianship for AIDENXAVIER GREY HOFSCHNEIDER, Minor Child	] FCD GU CIVIL] ACTION NO. 23-0148]]]]]
By: Junieva Pajarillo Reyes and Nicky Ubag Reyes Petitioner.	] NOTICE OF] HEARING]]]]]

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on **Friday, August 18, 2023** at **9:00 a.m.**, at the Tinian Courthouse, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 22nd day of June, 2023.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
_____/s/_____
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

The Marianas Experience highlights indigenous culture

The Marianas Experience opened on July 18, 2023, on Saipan, providing free interactive activities for visitors and residents highlighting indigenous culture and Marianas history.

The educational and entertaining experience welcomes the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 1pm to 7pm. Cultural activities are held from 1pm to 4pm, including coconut frond weaving, "mwar" (floral head lei) making, and banana printing art. Live performances of traditional and modern indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian music and dance are held from 4pm to 7pm.

The Marianas Experience is organized and led by DFS Saipan and is located within the T Galleria luxury retail complex in the main tourist district of downtown Garapan.

"DFS has been a longtime player since the '70s on Saipan, and we consider ourselves a member of the community, and this is just another way to connect with the community and give tourists a place to go as a destination above and beyond the marine sports activities and other activities to really feel a sense of destination," said DFS managing director Richard Gustafson.

The Marianas Experience also includes artifacts on display from the Northern Mariana Islands Museum of History & Culture, features on cultural leaders and traditions presented by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, a display of traditional Chamorro and Carolinian sailing canoes, and more. The event is also supported by the Marianas Visitors Authority.

"We are tremendously excited about the Marianas Experience and the unprecedented opportunity it brings to share our history and culture with visitors," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We invite every visitor to stop by to get a taste of the Marianas traditional way of life, our rich history, and our people. Cultural tourism is trendy in the travel industry today so the MVA wisely decided to invest in this exhibit in partnership with DFS and other stakeholders to enhance the overall visitor experience. We hope our visitors are motivated to learn and discover the rich cultural resources the Marianas has to offer."

Attendees will also find locally made items for purchase at the Made in the Marianas Corner, including handmade jewelry by Bonita Basula, apparel by Fotten Gaga, handmade greeting cards by Saipan Snaps, and handcrafted chocolates by Kensington Hotel Saipan.

"Our visitors are always looking for ways to learn about our islands culture and history and connect with the locals, and the Marianas Experience is a great way to feature our Chamorro and Carolinian cultural heritage and share it with our visitors so they can make lasting memories and hopefully return one day soon," said MVA board member Jamika Taijeron.

The Marianas Experience is also supported by Chamorro Carolinian Cultural Village Inc., the Commonwealth Council for Arts & Culture, and 500 Sails. ***(MVA)***

MVA

An artifact recovered from the Spanish galleon shipwreck *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion* is displayed on July 20, 2023, at the Marianas Experience, a free interactive cultural experience open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at T Galleria in Garapan, Saipan.

MVA

A Carolinian boy demonstrates how to blow the "sawi" (conch shell) for visitors on July 20, 2023, at the Marianas Experience, a free interactive cultural experience open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at T Galleria in Garapan, Saipan.

MVA

An interactive demonstration shows how to make indigenous Carolinian "mwar" (floral head lei) on July 20, 2023, at the Marianas Experience, a free interactive cultural experience open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at T Galleria in Garapan.

MVA

A craftsman makes jewelry from shells on July 20, 2023, at the Marianas Experience, a free interactive cultural experience open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at T Galleria in Garapan, Saipan.

MVA

Visitors enjoy watching an indigenous Chamorro dance on July 20, 2023, at the Marianas Experience, a free interactive cultural experience open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at T Galleria in Garapan.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB23-CHCC/CGC-TLC-018

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 14, 2023 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLE"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

ANTONIO SN. BORJA, Chairman — JAMES M. MENDIOLA, Vice Chairman — HENRY H. SAN NICOLAS, Member
DONALD M. HOFSCHNEIDER, Member — CHARLENE M. LIZAMA, Executive Director

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION

Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting on Monday, August 7, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes
  1. June 22, 2023 – Regular Meeting

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS[1]

III. REPORTS
- a. Chair's Report
- b. Executive Director's Report

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- a. Status Update of Bridge Investment Group/Tinian Diamond Casino
- b. Special Fee Assessment

V. NEW BUSINESS
- a. Casino Floor Layout – Tinian Diamond Casino
- b. Table Layout – Tinian Diamond Casino
- c. ED Recommendation No. 2023-02
- d. First Addendum to Section 16 Agreement between the TCGCC and Bridge Investment Group

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION[2]

VII. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

[1]*Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.*
[2] *Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.*

MARK SCOGGINS
SCOGGINS LAW OFFICE, LLC
2nd Floor, MIC Building, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero
San Jose Village
P.O. Box 501127 Saipan, MP 96950-1127
Telephone Nos.: (670) 234-7455 / 7427
Facsimile No.: (670) 234-7256

Attorney for Petitioner.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF	] Civil Action No. 23-0147
FEI MA Deceased.	] **NOTICE OF HEARING / NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
	] Date: August 24, 2023
	] Time: 10:00 a.m.
	] Judge: Honorable
	] Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE HEIRS, GENERAL PUBLIC AND CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT OR OF HIS ESTATE

Notice is hereby given that the Petitioner, Jian An Ma, has filed a Petition For Letters of Administration in the above-entitled Estate proceeding pursuant to Rule 15, Com. R. Prob.

A hearing on the petition will be conducted by the Court on **August 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.**, in Courtroom 220A, Superior Court. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

Pursuant to Rule 21, Com. R. Prob., notice is hereby given to all creditors of the Decedent or his Estate that they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of the publication of this notice. A copy of the claim of any creditor should be sent to Attorney Mark Scoggins at the above indicated address.

Reference is hereby made to the petition for further particulars.

SO ORDERED this August 1, 2023.

/s/ _____
JOSEPH N. CAMACHO, Associate Judge
CNMI Superior Court

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: DPW23-RFP No.: 42300084

SUBMISSION DATE: August 25, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Kagman Watershed Flood Protection and Irrigation Supply (KWP) Supplemental Watershed Plan-Environmental Document (SWP-ED)"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after July 24, 2023 at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred **Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on August 09, 2023, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Department of Land and Natural Resources Lower Base Office**, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on August 18, 2023 to **Mr. George C. Sablan, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

/S/ SYLVAN O. IGISOMAR
Secretary, DLNR

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 154

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Judge nixes silly Arizona statute

If you physically try to stop a police officer from doing his or her job, you're likely to be arrested. You could be preventing officers from stopping a serious crime or even saving a life.

But simply filming the police as they perform their duties is an entirely different matter.

Last year, Arizona Republicans passed legislation making it a crime for bystanders to film "law enforcement activity" while too close to police. "Too close" was defined as 8 feet away. Those who refused to comply after receiving a verbal warning faced misdemeanor charges. There were exceptions, including for passengers in a car or someone in a private residence.

The proposal was met with immediate backlash from media organizations and civil rights groups. First Amendment, anyone? The arbitrary 8-foot standard was just that—plucked out of the blue in an effort to intimidate bystanders from pulling out their cameras to catch the cops in action.

Even the bill's sponsor, state Sen. John Kavanaugh, a Republican who represents a northeast Phoenix-area district, admitted in a newspaper op-ed that he offered the proposal at the behest of Tucson police officers who were upset that a group of would-be Francis Ford Coppolas were following around local officers in an effort to document police misconduct.

A federal judge last year temporarily blocked implementation of the legislation. Last week, he tossed the law altogether. "The law prohibits or chills a substantial amount of First Amendment protected activity and is unnecessary to prevent interference with police officers given other Arizona laws in effect," wrote U.S. District Judge John J. Tuchi.

It's worth noting that Arizona barely bothered to defend the statute—which raises the question of why lawmakers passed this inane proposal in the first place. Mr. Kavanaugh, who just happens to be a former law enforcement officer, said he was unable to find an outside group to fight for the legislation.

Whether the police like it or not, filming in a public area is a constitutionally protected activity. As the judge pointed out, laws already exist to prosecute those who prevent police officers from doing their jobs.

The law was especially ridiculous given that many police agencies now equip their officers with body cameras that document confrontations and the footage is often available to the public. And don't forget that filming works both ways. While the camera may reveal law enforcement wrongdoing, it can also protect officers from unfounded allegations leveled by wrongdoers.

The Arizona bill was unconstitutional on its face. If law enforcement officers are afraid of being filmed, they should adjust their conduct accordingly rather than try to conceal it. Judge Tuchi hit this softball out of the park.

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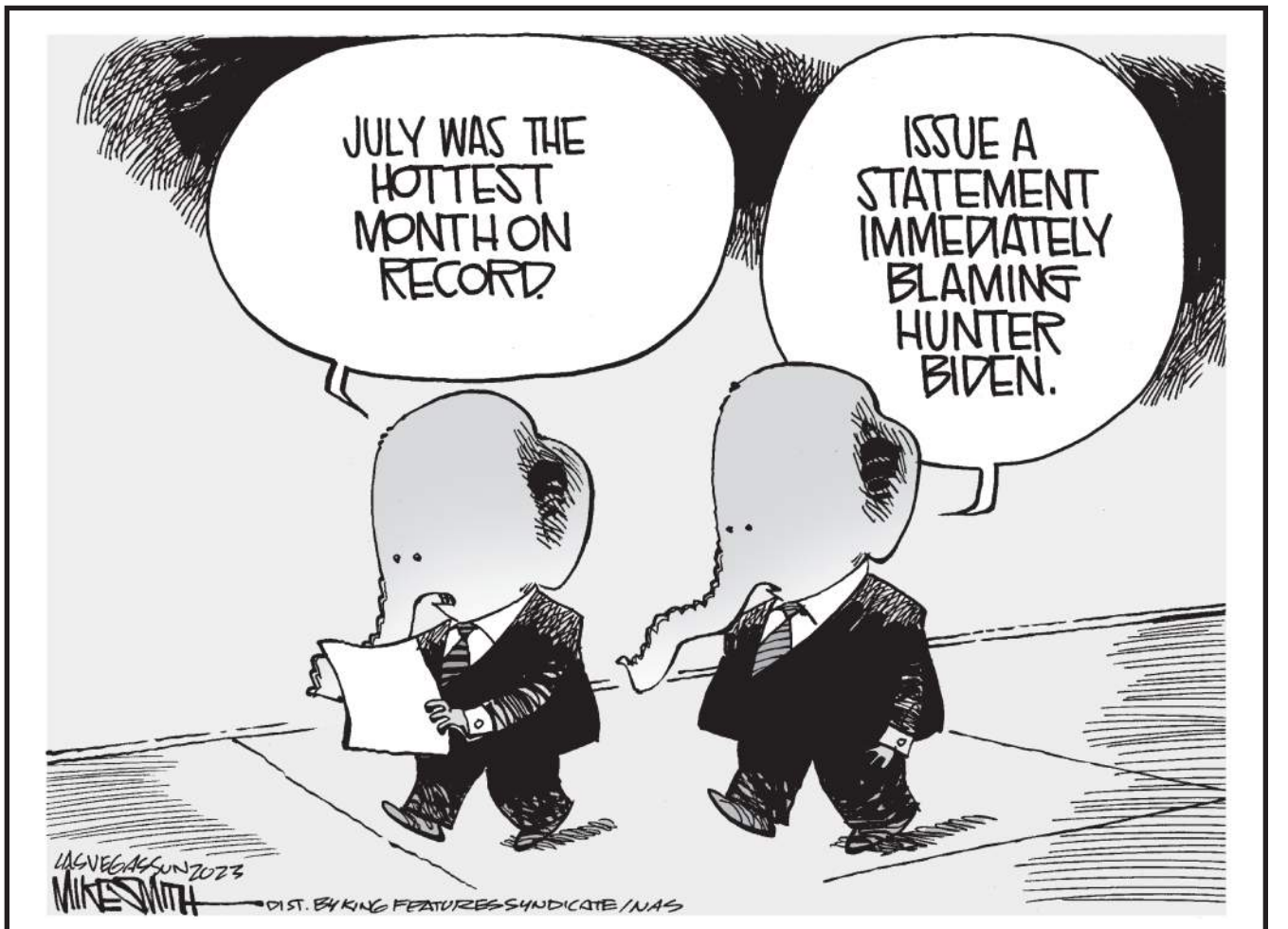
JULY WAS THE HOTTEST MONTH ON RECORD.
ISSUE A STATEMENT IMMEDIATELY BLAMING HUNTER BIDEN.
LASVEGASSUN2023
MIKESMITH
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Don't panic over malaria in the US. But do worry about mosquitoes

By SAAD B. OMER
Los Angeles Times

Saad B. Omer is the founding dean of the Peter O'Donnell Jr. School of Public Health at UT Southwestern. The opinions expressed are entirely his own. Threads: @ saad.b.omer.

Since May, at least eight cases of locally transmitted malaria have been reported—the first such instances in the United States in 20 years. Although a relatively small number of U.S. residents contract malaria abroad each year, the individuals recently affected in Texas and Florida did not leave their states before falling ill, suggesting they got sick from mosquitoes in this country.

As a result, officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state health departments issued alerts to notify doctors and the public. Since the cases in Florida and Texas appear not to be connected, they are unlikely to pose a threat of a larger outbreak around the country. There's no need for alarm—at least not right now.

But in the long term, mosquitoes deserve our attention. These malaria cases could be harbingers of climate change-related alteration in mosquito habitats that reshape the geography of human disease and could hinder decades' worth of progress in fighting mosquito-borne diseases in the U.S.

Mosquitoes have been dubbed the world's deadliest animal. The flying pests are responsible for more than 400,000 deaths a year from diseases including malaria, dengue and yellow fever. With global climate change, more areas—even those away from the equator or at relatively high elevations—are becoming hospitable to mosquitoes. Parasites and viruses carried by these insects thus become more likely to be transmitted to humans.

Similarly, humans are increasingly encroaching on territories such as rain forests that are inhabited by disease-transmitting animals including mosquitoes and bats. This pattern further raises the chances that new pathogens will reach humans and that we'll see outbreaks of older pathogens in places that had previously prevented or controlled them.

A groundbreaking study published last year and led by scientists at Georgetown University estimated how climate change and resulting shifts in land use will affect the spillover of viruses from one species to another through 2070. The study predicts that as species gather in new combinations "at high elevations, in biodiversity hotspots, and in areas of high human population density in Asia and Africa," that movement will lead to "cross-species transmission of their associated viruses an estimated 4,000 times."

It will be a failure of our collective imagination if we do not prepare for emerging and re-emerging infections. Fortunately, there are ways we can prepare and mitigate the effects.

For starters, continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other drivers of global climate change will make a difference, even though it is too late to rely only on prevention strategies. Keeping the warming as minimal as possible will still reduce the movement of disease-carriers such as mosquitoes and dangerous human contact with them.

We also could be doing more about known disease threats including malaria. Two safe and effective vaccines are already available and are currently recommended in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and other countries where this parasitic disease is endemic. Ensuring that these vaccines—and the next generation of even more effective options—are introduced in all countries with a significant burden of malaria will reduce the risk everywhere, including in the U.S.

For more novel disease threats, awareness is essential. Investing in a modern epidemiological surveillance infrastructure around the world will give us precious lead time to predict, detect and track emerging outbreaks. This means upgrading laboratory capacity, particularly in high-risk geographic regions, and public health data systems globally.

We also should invest in vaccines and countermeasures against diseases that could be a threat in the future, not only those that cause significant death and disability now. One such effort to stay ahead of pathogens is the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, launched in 2017 with an initial investment of $460 million by the governments of Japan, Norway and Germany as well as the Wellcome Trust and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Other countries have joined this coalition, and after sitting on the sidelines for several years, the U.S. government finally started providing financial support to this initiative in 2022.

By conducting proof-of-concept and safety testing and establishing vaccine stockpiles before epidemics take off, such initiatives do the crucial work of ensuring that vaccines and drugs against emerging pathogens are ready for deployment.

Malaria cases popping up in Texas and Florida do not portend a new mass outbreak. But rising temperatures and changing land use do mean new footholds for infectious foes new and old. We ignore them at our peril.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Trump is facing his most important indictment yet—and nearly insurmountable odds at trial

By HARRY LITMAN
Los Angeles Times

Harry Litman is host of the Talking Feds *podcast. @harrylitman*

The indictment of Donald Trump handed up in federal court in Washington Tuesday initiates the most important case in the country's history.

The document lays out a flagrant series of attacks on the peaceful transfer of power and on constitutional rule itself.

The four counts against the former president include obstruction of an official proceeding—namely, Congress' Jan. 6, 2021, certification of Joe Biden's election—and three conspiracies: to defraud the United States, obstruct an official proceeding and deny voting rights.

Who were Trump's alleged co-conspirators? Following Justice Department custom, the indictment does not name them because they haven't been charged, but it isn't hard to discern some of their identities from their descriptions in the document, including Trump lawyers Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman.

Charges may well follow against the co-conspirators, some of whom could choose to part company with Trump and cooperate with the government. But the decision to begin with a federal indictment of the former president alone—United States vs. Trump—underscores special counsel Jack Smith's resolve to seek a relatively speedy trial, as he noted in a statement Tuesday evening. These latest charges against Trump, his third indictment (and probably counting), are now the most likely to proceed to jury trial before November 2024, when Trump looks increasingly likely to be on the ballot as the Republican presidential nominee.

Another significant figure described in the indictment, former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, is not characterized as a co-conspirator. That suggests Smith has secured Meadows' cooperation as a government witness.

Without co-defendants, Trump will face trial against nearly insurmountable odds. His best hope now will be to delay the trial until after the election or attempt to get a holdout juror who will refuse to vote for a conviction regardless of the evidence. The prospects of an acquittal are vanishingly small.

Trump's chances of achieving an extended delay of the trial on this indictment are dim compared with the previous federal indictment for retention of classified documents, in which the former president has the benefit of a possibly sympathetic judge, Aileen Cannon, and thorny legal arguments to make. We can expect him to mount vigorous challenges on the basis of executive privilege in the latest case, but the law is already fairly settled against him.

While Smith was characteristically laconic in his statement Tuesday, the second Trump indictment his team has produced is, like the first, extraordinarily detailed and informative. It lays out a series of three brazen conspiracies to steal the election from its rightful winner.

The core charged crimes stem from Trump and his co-conspirators' efforts to replace legitimate electors with phony ones; delay the Jan. 6 proceedings by pressuring then-Vice President Mike Pence to exceed his constitutional role; and disenfranchise voters through the variety of shenanigans Trump and his team employed to "find" nonexistent votes in the six states he lost most narrowly.

Smith could have gone for broke by charging Trump with seditious conspiracy. He chose not to—wisely in my view. The crimes he has charged will be simpler to prove and less vulnerable to appellate reversal down the line. If he can secure a conviction for those crimes, it will adequately hold Trump guilty in fact and in history.

Biden was the intermediary victim of Trump's alleged treachery. But the ultimate victims, as the indictment makes clear, were the American people, who came closer than many would have imagined to having their right to choose their president criminally upended before their eyes.

Another important revelation Tuesday was the identity of the judge in the case: Tanya Chutkan, an experienced and well-regarded Obama appointee. And any appeals of her rulings will go to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, which has proved wise to Trump's legal hijinks and would be prepared to act quickly to cut them short.

Tuesday's indictment is expected to be followed by a fourth set of charges against Trump, in Fulton County, Georgia. But the accumulation of cases against him appears only to have helped consolidate his support for the Republican presidential nomination.

The latest indictment, its unprecedented gravity notwithstanding, isn't likely to alter that effect. Trump will no doubt continue to make his supposed persecution the centerpiece of his campaign, suggesting he is some dark messiah fighting a deep state bent on the oppression of his supporters. In the perverse political culture for which he is substantially responsible, voters won't just overlook the grievous allegations against him; they may see them as qualifications for the job he's seeking.

That only compounds the enormous stakes of the charges. Smith and his team have no choice but to ignore the political cacophony and keep the focus on the 12 Americans who will return a verdict.

If the prosecution is interrupted by a Trump victory, we are lost regardless. But if Smith can prove these serious charges beyond a reasonable doubt, he will secure accountability for the worst series of political crimes in our history.

What should the US do to normalize ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia?

By DANIEL DEPETRIS
Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

For President Joe Biden, a normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia is the Holy Grail of diplomatic deals in the Middle East.

Normalization would have positive ripple effects throughout the region, fully incorporate Israel into the Middle East's political order and bring the White House a significant foreign policy win less than a year before the 2024 presidential election campaign gets underway.

That's the conventional wisdom. But is it correct? How beneficial would an Israeli-Saudi normalization accord actually be for the U.S.? Would it be as groundbreaking to the regional order as we are led to believe? And what would Washington have to concede to make it happen?

One would hope the Biden administration is asking all of these questions as U.S. officials travel to Saudi Arabia to cajole Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman into making history.

What can't be questioned is the degree to which the White House is interested in bringing Israel and Saudi Arabia, arguably its two closest security partners, into a formal embrace. In May, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan visited the kingdom, followed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken's shuttle diplomacy in June, when he briefed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on what Riyadh may be willing to consider. Sullivan made a return trip to Saudi Arabia last week in what was billed as an attempt to "advance a common vision" for a more secure and peaceful Middle East. The Biden administration is trying to hash it all out by the end of the year.

The practicalities are difficult, to say the least. In addition to the compressed time frame, a lot will have to go right. Prince Mohammed considers himself a transformational figure and would theoretically like to see Riyadh establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel. But the Saudis are highly unlikely to do this without landing some concrete assurances to the Palestinian Authority in the process. In other words, Israel-Saudi normalization will happen only if Israel is willing to provide the Palestinian Authority with a diplomatic win as well. What form those concessions would take is anybody's guess, but examples could include allowing the authority to administer more territory in the West Bank, capping settlement expansion in territory the Palestinians claim for a future state or promising to end unilateral Israeli counterterrorism operations in areas that the Palestinian Authority nominally controls.

The problem is that all of these concessions could be politically treacherous for Netanyahu, who leads a coalition opposed to the very notion of a Palestinian state. Even Biden, who prefers to settle differences with Israel in private, lamented that some of Israel's ministers are the most extreme he has ever seen. Would Netanyahu, the definition of a political survivor, do his part if it meant jeopardizing a job he reclaimed just nine months ago?

Then there is the question of whether a formal diplomatic normalization accord orchestrated by the U.S. is even needed. The Israelis and Saudis have made considerable progress improving bilateral ties on their own over the years. A relationship that was traditionally seen as adversarial is now anything but. Sure, the two countries still have their issues, particularly on the Palestinian issue. But the lack of progress on Mideast peace hasn't prevented Riyadh from gradually working with Israel when its interests call for it.

Israeli and Saudi intelligence agencies have been cooperating with one another for quite a long time, and that once discreet relationship is slowly making its way into the public domain. Last year, Saudi Arabia agreed to allow Israeli aircraft to travel through Saudi airspace on their way to other destinations. Israeli business leaders have been invited to the kingdom and courted as potential investors, and rumors of Riyadh investing in Israel are never far away. The fact is that Israel and Saudi Arabia may not even need the U.S. to push them together; realpolitik is a powerful force.

The most problematic aspect of a potential Israeli-Saudi normalization deal, however, is what the U.S. would have to concede to make it happen. Prince Mohammed knows full well that the Biden administration wants an agreement, and he's prepared to milk it for all it's worth. Normal relations with Israel won't come cheap. According to New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, the Saudis want the U.S. to grant them a NATO-style defense treaty that would require the U.S. to come to the kingdom's defense in the event of an attack; U.S. support for a Saudi nuclear program that includes the right to enrich; and more access to U.S. weapons platforms such as the world-renowned Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-ballistic missile defense system.

This would be a huge lift for any U.S. president, let alone Biden, who has a long history of being one of the more high-profile skeptics of the kingdom in Washington. It's doubtful the average American would sympathize with, let alone support, sending U.S. soldiers to fight and die for a country that continues to leverage its status as the world's swing oil producer to raise prices at the pump. If the price of Israeli-Saudi normalization is turning U.S. soldiers into security guards for the ruling family, then the trade-off simply isn't worth it.

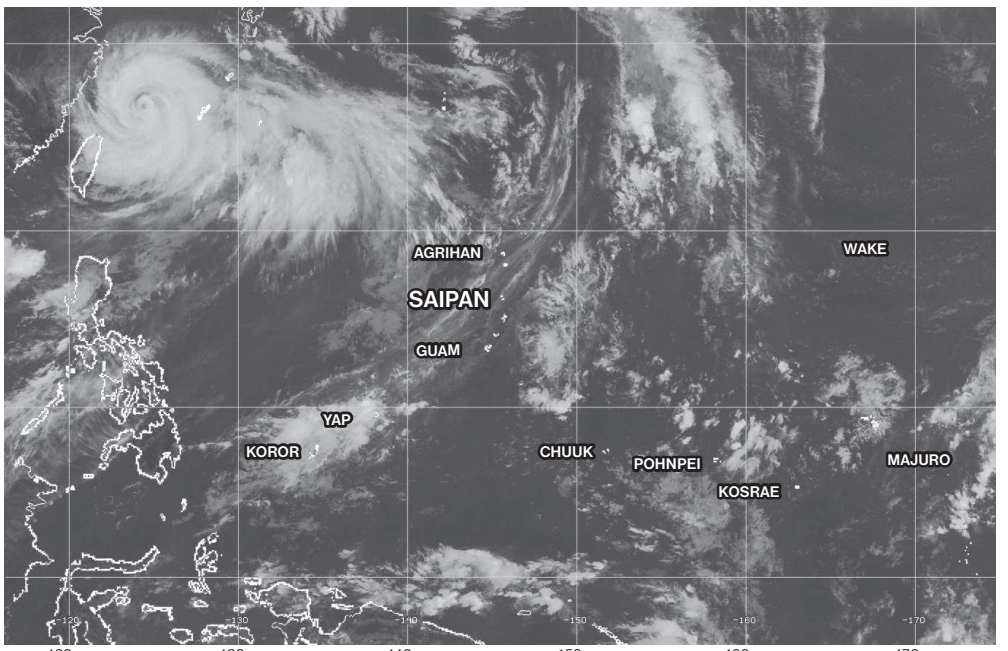
Addressing campaign supporters on Friday, Biden declared cautious confidence that two of the region's most powerful states were edging toward a new era. Exciting stuff. But he needs to ensure that the cost Washington is willing to pay is not disproportionate.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86° 80°	86° 78°	86° 79°	86° 79°	87° 79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:25 AM, THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows a weak circulation about 100 miles south-southeast of Guam. A sufrace trough extends to the north-northeast from this circulation and is interacting with an upper-level trough also to our east. The Ipan buoy reveals trade-wind swell from the east of about 3 feet. Computer wave model guidance shows a west-northwest swell of about 3 feet from distant Typhoon Khanun. This gives total combined seas of around 4 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Isolated Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Palau	Isolated Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Yap	Isolated Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	88° / 76°
Kosrae	Scattered Thunderstorms	88° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:00 AM	6:46 PM
Saturday	6:00 AM	6:45 PM
Sunday	6:00 AM	6:45 PM
Monday	6:00 AM	6:44 PM
Tuesday	6:00 AM	6:44 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	8:15 AM	9:02 PM
Saturday	-	9:14 AM	9:44 PM
Sunday	-	10:11 AM	10:24 PM
Monday	-	11:06 AM	11:05 PM
Tuesday	-	12:02 PM	11:47 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	57° / 52°
Beijing	Showers	84° / 72°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Showers	88° / 78°
London	Showers	73° / 59°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	82° / 67°
Manila	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Melbourne	Showers	57° / 45°
Miami	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
New York	Thunderstorms	86° / 74°
Osaka	Thunderstorms	95° / 81°
Paris	Showers	75° / 63°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	86° / 79°
Rome	Sunny	91° / 68°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	89° / 72°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	62° / 54°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	84° / 77°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	93° / 81°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	91° / 73°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
3:32 AM	Low Tide	1.22
8:38 AM	High Tide	2.24
3:51 PM	Low Tide	-0.17
10:32 PM	High Tide	2.16

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR 111	6:55AM	8:55AM	2, 6
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	Daily
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:55AM	8:45AM	1, 5
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	2, 3, 5, 6, 7
PR110	11:30PM	5:25AM+1	1, 5
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	Daily
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	Daily
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	4, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Biden delays plans to restock nation's emergency oil reserve

WASHINGTON (AP)— The Biden administration is delaying plans to restock the nation's emergency oil reserve amid a price hike that has pushed oil above $80 a barrel.

The Energy Department canceled a planned purchase of 6 million barrels for the strategic reserve this week, saying it wants to secure a good deal for taxpayers.

The administration said it remains committed to refilling the reserve, which President Joe Biden significantly drained last year in a bid to stop gasoline prices from rising amid production cuts by OPEC and a ban on Russian oil imports because of the war in Ukraine.

"The DOE remains committed to its replenishment strategy for the SPR, including direct purchases when we can secure a good deal for taxpayers," Energy Department Deputy Chief of Staff Bridget Bartol said in a statement, using a nickname for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the official name for the emergency stockpile.

Officials also will use targeted exchange returns and cancellation of planned oil sales "where drawdown is unnecessary, in coordination with Congress," Bartol said.

Biden withdrew 180 million barrels from the strategic reserve starting in March 2022, bringing the stockpile to its lowest level since the 1980s.

Biden's drawdown brought the reserve to about half its approximately 700-million barrel capacity as he sought to tame high gasoline prices in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Tapping the reserve is among the few actions a president can take by himself to try to control inflation, an election-year liability for the party in control of the White House.

The Energy Department began refilling the reserve earlier this year, purchasing 6.3 million barrels and canceling 140 million barrels in congressionally mandated sales that were set to occur in the next three years. Congress approved the sales cancellations in a spending bill last December.

AP

President Joe Biden responds to reporters as he gets in to his presidential vehicle in Rehoboth Beach, Del., Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2023.

The price for the oil purchase was not announced, but benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude oil was selling at about $74 per barrel when the transaction was approved. Benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude oil was selling at $81.85 per barrel on Wednesday amid tighter global supplies.

Gasoline prices, meanwhile, have risen to about $3.80 per gallon, up from $3.53 per gallon in mid-May, according to the AAA auto club. Prices peaked at just over $5 per gallon in June 2022.

An Energy spokeswoman emphasized that the U.S. maintains plentiful reserves that "stand ready should there be an emergency" that requires officials to tap into the stockpile held in huge salt caverns in Louisiana and Texas.

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm has said she intends to refill the reserve, although she told CNN last month that it might not be completed during Biden's current term, which ends in January 2025.

David J. John appointed to BOG board of directors

HAGATNA, Guam—Bank of Guam announces the appointment of David J. John as a Class II Director of its Board. John was further appointed to the Trust, Asset/Liability and Executive Committees. His appointment to the board and committees was effective Aug. 1, 2023

John

John fills the vacancy left by Frances L.G. Boria who resigned from the Bank of Guam Board effective May 31, 2023. Borja has served as a member of the Bank Board of Directors since 2005.

"We extend our heartfelt thanks to Frances for her outstanding service and invaluable contributions to our organization. Her dedication and guidance have been instrumental in shaping our journey to success in the CNMI and beyond. For David, he has been a part of our Familia for many years, so we're excited to officially welcome him to the Bank of Guam Familia in this new role. We have always admired his dedication to our People, his support in seeing small businesses succeed, and his commitment to giving back to our communities. He brings an exceptional level of trust, energy, and experience to the Board that will strengthen our mission of helping our customers succeed financially. We wholeheartedly welcome David to the Board," said Joaquin P. L.G. Cook, president and chief executive officer.

John has been a prominent leader in retirement plan management and currently holds the position of chairman and managing director at ASC Trust LLC, an affiliate of Bank of Guam. His instrumental role in developing a successful firm specializing in the management of retirement plans in the Asia- Pacific region has resulted in an impressive portfolio of over $1 billion in retirement assets. Moreover, ASC Trust serves a vast clientele of 36,000 participants and oversees 660 retirement plans.

John was educated at the University of Saint Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota and is a licensed investment advisor. He also serves in many civic and community organizations including being the current chairman of the Guam Economic Development Authority; board member of the University of Guam Endowment Fund; board member of GTA TeleGuam; member of the Fidelity Advisor Council; chairman of the Archdiocese of Guam Finance Council; and board member of the University of St. Thomas.

He is also a recipient of the Guam SBA 2016 Small Businessperson of the Year. ***(PR)***

IRS aims to go paperless by 2025

By FATIMA HUSSEIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Most taxpayers will be able to digitally submit a slew of tax documents and other communications to the IRS next filing season as the agency aims to go completely paperless by 2025.

The effort to reduce the exorbitant load of paperwork that has plagued the agency—dubbed the "paperless processing initiative"—was announced Wednesday by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel.

The effort is being financed through an $80 billion infusion of cash for the IRS over 10 years under the Inflation Reduction Act passed into law last August, although some of that money already is being cut back.

"Thanks to the IRA, we are in the process of transforming the IRS into a digital-first agency," Yellen said during a visit to an IRS paper processing facility in McLean, Virginia.

"By the next filing season," she said, "taxpayers will be able to digitally submit all correspondence, non-tax forms, and notice responses to the IRS."

"Of course, taxpayers will always have the choice to submit documents by paper," she added.

Under the initiative, most people will be able to submit everything but their tax returns digitally in 2024. And as the IRS pilots its new electronic free file tax return system starting in 2024, the agency will be able to process everything, including tax returns, digitally by 2025.

The processing change is expected to cut back on the $40 million per year that the agency spends storing more than 1 billion historical documents. The federal tax administrator receives more than 200 million paper tax returns, forms, and pieces of mail and non-tax forms annually, according to the IRS.

Roughly 213.4 million returns and other forms were filed electronically in fiscal year 2022, which represents 81.2 percent of all filings, according to IRS data.

AP

A sign outside the Internal Revenue Service building in Washington, on May 4, 2021.

Coupled with decades of underfunding, an overload of paper documents has prevented the agency from processing tax forms at a faster pace in years past, agency leaders have said. The new initiative should allow the agency to expedite refunds by several weeks, according to the IRS.

In June, National Taxpayer Advocate Erin M. Collins said the IRS cut its backlog of unprocessed paper tax returns by 80%, from 13.3 million returns at the end of the 2022 filing season to 2.6 million at the end of the 2023 filing season.

The federal tax collector's funding is still vulnerable to cutbacks. House Republicans built a $1.4 billion reduction to the IRS into the debt ceiling and budget cuts package passed by Congress this summer.

The White House said the debt deal also has a separate agreement to take $20 billion from the IRS over the next two years and divert that money to other non-defense programs.

BOH accepting grant applications for small biz on Saipan

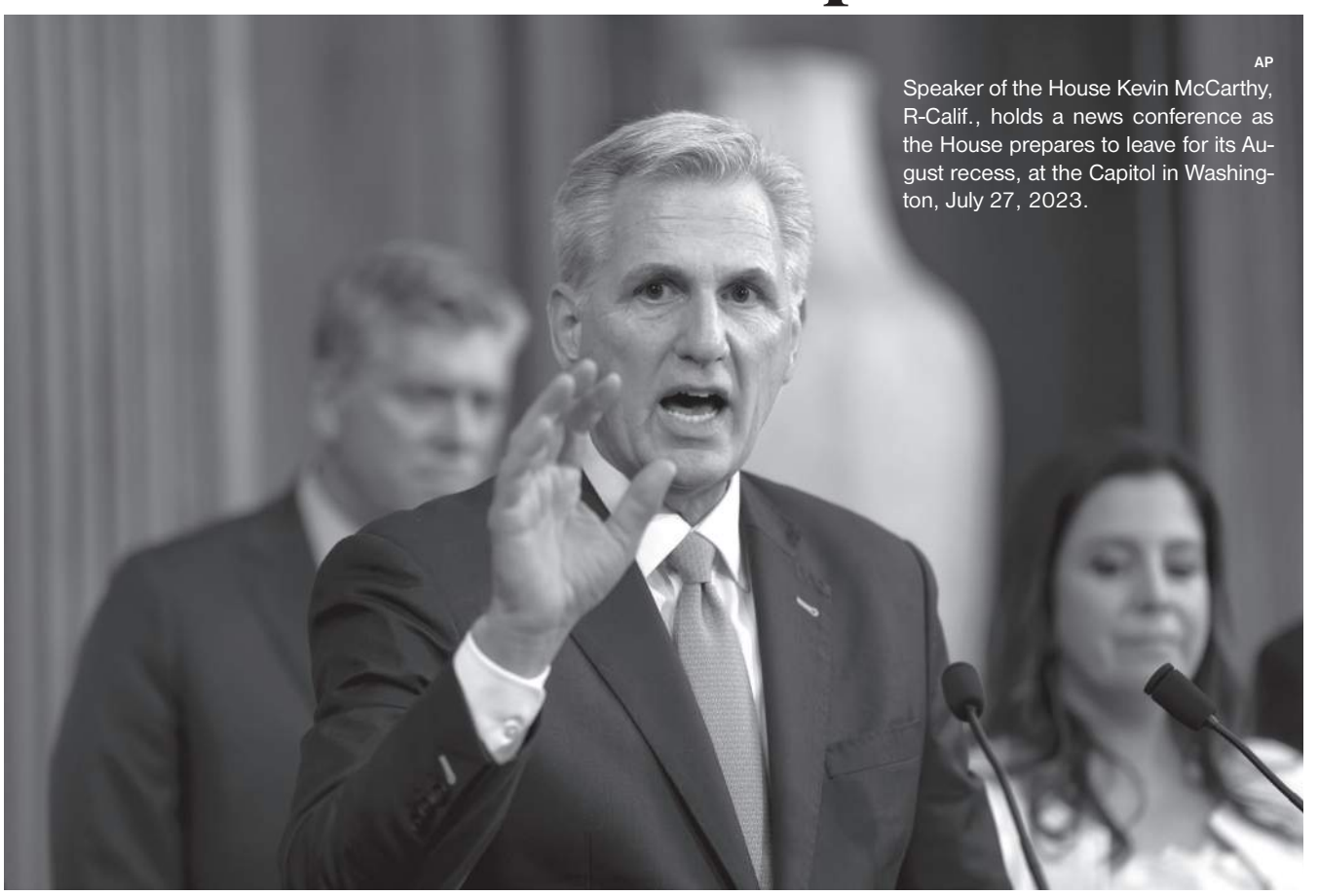
Bank of Hawai'i is accepting applications from Aug. 7 to Aug. 11 for the I Kinometi Para I Kumunidåt I Islå-ta Small Business Revitalization and Development Grant for projects that stimulate small business development and economic activity on Saipan. Small business owners with a successful track record in business operation or management and who have not yet been a recipient of the grant are invited to submit an application by Friday, Aug. 11, 2023. Five grants up to $5,000 each will be awarded.

Bank of Hawai'i established the grant program in 2012 to promote new businesses and to encourage existing small businesses on the island of Saipan to expand as part of its overall commitment to encourage local economic stability and development.

Grants will be awarded based on the potential impact to the applicant's business and the economic benefits to the community. Grant awardees are expected to report to the bank on how the grant has made a difference to their business and the community by Friday, Sept. 29, 2023. Applications are available at boh.com/saipanapp or by contacting either the CNMI Small Business Development Center Network Northern Marianas College at marianas.ecenterdirect.com, Bank of Hawai'i's Gualo Rai Branch, our Gualo Rai Branch Manager Rose Sumor at Rose.Sumor@boh.com or (670) 237-2983, or Assistant Branch Manager Joanne Aldan at Joanne.Aldan@boh.com or (670) 237-2982. Applications should be submitted to Branch Manager Rose Sumor via email at Rose.Sumor@boh.com or by regular mail to Bank of Hawai'i, branch manager, Saipan, Box 500566, Saipan MP 96950. ***(PR)***

Nation

GOP don't dare criticize Trump over Jan. 6



AP

Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., holds a news conference as the House prepares to leave for its August recess, at the Capitol in Washington, July 27, 2023.

WASHINGTON (AP)—When Senate Leader Mitch McConnell rose to announce his vote to acquit Donald Trump of impeachment charges in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, the Republican assured the public the former president would have his day in court.

"He didn't get away with anything yet — yet," McConnell vowed.

"We have a criminal justice system in this country. We have civil litigation. And former presidents are not immune from being accountable by either one."

But as Trump prepares to appear Thursday on federal charges that he orchestrated an unprecedented effort to overturn President Joe Biden's 2020 election win, the Republican Party's 2024 frontrunner for the White House faces no such dire warnings or recriminations from fellow Republicans.

It's a piercing silence that commands attention as Trump towers over the field of Republican contenders for the presidency. Gone are those who once stood up to Trump. Instead, the party Trump leads has essentially given up on criticizing his actions, countering his impulses or putting a check on his accumulating power.

Scholars of authoritarian history warn it is a classic example of an eroding democracy.

"He'll do it again," said a new ad from the Republican Accountability Project, an advocacy group. "Unless he faces consequences."

The Justice Department indictment of Trump outlines with new detail the extent to which the defeated president resorted to a far-flung scheme to overturn Biden's election, culminating with the deadly Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol, a domestic attack unlike any other in U.S. history.

Most members of Congress have personal experiences with the events of Jan. 6 — some barricading the doors to the House chamber or fleeing for their safety as the mob of thousands of Trump supporters laid siege.

At the time, Republican leader Kevin McCarthy called it his "saddest day" in Congress, and he said Trump "bears responsibility" for what happened.

After the 45-page indictment was delivered late Tuesday, McCarthy, now the House speaker, had a different reaction. He called it "DOJ's attempt to distract from the news and attack the frontrunner for the Republican nomination, President Trump."

The shift among Republicans in Congress was quick for some, unequivocal for others and now, as Trump seeks a return to the White House, all but complete.

Republicans who once challenged Trump, like former Rep. Liz Cheney, have been booted from office by voters, or forced into earlier retirement. Those who remain, including Sen. Mitt Romney, are routinely bullied and badgered by Trump, in humiliating public displays.

Of those 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump over the insurrection at the Capitol, few remain, along with a handful of senators who voted to convict.

Instead, the Republicans in Congress are turning their attention to investigating Biden and his son, Hunter, over the family finances. They are also working to gut the Justice Department and revise the narrative of what happened on Jan. 6, 2021, as they seek to expunge Trump's impeachment record.

A top Trump ally, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, who is also close to McCarthy, said she would work to defund special counsel Jack Smith's office during the fall budget battles. She also wants to impeach Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Trump supporters view latest indictment as evidence of crime—against Trump

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former President Donald Trump and his supporters are reacting to a third indictment against him with a now-familiar playbook: deflecting with unrelated accusations, distracting with misleading claims about the charges, and demonizing the prosecution.

Instead of convincing his followers about the seriousness of the charges, Tuesday's indictment is being held up as proof of a conspiracy to take down Trump and a continuation of the effort by Democrats, the media and the so-called deep state to interfere with the nation's elections.

For years Trump has told his supporters that elections can't be trusted and that he is a victim of a corrupt persecution by the government and media. With that narrative endorsed by conservative news outlets and amplified on social media, it's only natural that many of Trump's supporters will accept it, said Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a New York University historian who studies authoritarian propaganda.

"He's set up the idea since 2016 that elections themselves are corrupt and cannot be trusted. This is seven years now of this narrative," Ben-Ghiat said. "Trump is one of the most superb propagandists of the 21st century. He has created this seamless world, where to his followers, everything just confirms his victimhood."

Trump's repeated lies about the election are at the heart of the latest indictment, which alleges Trump sought to overturn his 2020 election loss in the two months before his supporters violently assaulted the U.S. Capitol.

"The attack on our nation's capital on January 6, 2021, was an unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy," special counsel Jack Smith said Tuesday. "As described in the indictment, it was fueled by lies. Lies by the defendant targeted at obstructing a bedrock function of the U.S. government, the nation's process of collecting, counting, and certifying the results of the presidential election."

Separately, the ex-president faces charges that he falsified business records relating to hush-money payments to a porn actor in New York and improperly kept classified documents at his Florida resort and obstructed an investigation into their handling.

To his most dedicated supporters, the allegations against Trump are just more evidence of the conspiracy. It's a sentiment that spread quickly on social media after Trump's first and second indictment, and it was easily found Wednesday on Telegram, Gab, Truth Social and other platforms popular with conservatives.

"The Democrats stole the 2020 election," conservative filmmaker Dinesh D'Souza posted on Truth Social and X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. "This indictment is an attempt to protect the thieves and legitimize the heist."

Much of the misinformation about the indictments has originated with Trump, who instead of trying to minimize his legal jeopardy has made it a centerpiece of his campaign, framing it as an assault on democracy, freedom and his own followers.

The former president's allies — and his legal defense team — argue that the indictment illegally criminalizes Trump's protected freedom of speech. Trump attorney John Lauro said on CNN Tuesday that the team's "focus is on the fact that this is an attack on free speech and political advocacy." "Free speech will not survive if this indictment succeeds," former Trump adviser Stephen Miller told Fox News.

ACROSS THE NATION

Mother gets 14 years in death of newborn found floating off Florida coast in 2018

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—A mother who dumped her newborn's body into the ocean off the Florida coast five years ago pleaded guilty Wednesday to manslaughter and was sentenced to 14 years in prison. Arya Singh, 30, also pleaded guilty to abuse of a corpse during a Palm Beach County court hearing. She had been facing a second-degree murder charge, which carried a potential life sentence. The infant girl, whose body was found floating off Palm Beach County on June 1, 2018, by an off-duty firefighter, was dubbed "Baby June." The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office launched a massive search for the mother. Detectives checked more than 600 mothers who had given birth in nearby hospitals, but all still had their babies. The case went cold until last year when detectives ran the baby's DNA through a genetic database that turned up a relative of the father. The father told detectives he had not known about the child until a month or two after she was born.

Hawaii man dies after being mauled by 4 large dogs

HILO, Hawaii (AP)—A 71-year-old man has died after being mauled by four dogs on Hawaii's Big Island, police said. The man was treated by medical personnel at the scene and died while being transported Tuesday to Kona Community Hospital, police said in a statement. Police later identified him as Robert Northrop, of Ocean View. Police were alerted by a witness, who saw the victim being attacked in the Hawaiian Ocean View Estates neighborhood by four large dogs. The witness chased the dogs off and called authorities. "There is currently no evidence that the victim provoked this horrific attack. This incident is a senseless tragedy that could have been avoided," Hawaii County Police Chief Ben Moszkowicz said. The dogs' owners were not home when the attack occurred, but police have contacted them.

Police are also checking claims the dogs had previously been reported as stray animals. The owners have surrendered all four dogs and a litter of 10 puppies to county animal control. Police are investigating it as a suspected case of negligent failure to control a dangerous dog, the release said.

Woman killed, toddler son among 3 others shot standing on sidewalk in Chicago

CHICAGO (AP)—A 23-year-old woman was killed and three other people—including her 2-year-old son—also were shot Wednesday on Chicago's South Side, police said. The toddler was hospitalized in good condition after being shot in a foot, as were his 29-year-old father, who also was shot in a foot, and a 62-year-old man, who was shot in the back, Chicago Police Department Chief of Patrol Brian McDermott said in a news conference near the scene in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood. The victims were standing on a sidewalk around 3 p.m. when assailants got out of a vehicle and opened fire before fleeing the scene, McDermott said. The woman was shot multiple times and died later at a hospital, authorities said. The woman and the 29-year-old man were the parents of the toddler, McDermott said. No one was in custody.

Asia

Suu Kyi has some of her prison sentences reduced

AP
Myanmar's then leader Aung San Suu Kyi delivers a speech in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, on Jan. 28, 2020. Myanmar's military-led government has reduced the prison sentences of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a clemency connected to a religious ceremony, state media said Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2023.

BANGKOK (AP)—Myanmar's military-led government reduced the prison sentences of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a clemency connected to a religious holiday in the Buddhist-majority country, state media said Tuesday.

Former President Win Myint also had his sentence reduced as part of the clemency granted to more than 7,000 prisoners.

But Suu Kyi, 78, still must serve a total of 27 years out of the 33 she originally was imprisoned for.

The head of Myanmar's military council, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, granted the clemency order to reduce the sentences Suu Kyi received in five cases in which she was convicted for violating coronavirus restrictions, illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies and sedition, according to a report on state MRTV.

She was initially sentenced for 19 offenses that her supporters and rights groups described as attempts to discredit her and legitimize the 2021 army takeover that removed her from office, as well as to prevent her return to politics.

There were reports last week that Suu Kyi might be transferred to house arrest as part of the clemency, but the government did not confirm them.

The military's True News Information Team sent video footage to journalists in which the spokesperson for the ruling military council, Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, tells reporters he had not received any information about reports saying Suu Kyi already was transferred from prison to a residence in Myanmar's capital, Naypyitaw.

"I haven't heard anything about it," Zaw Min Tun said Tuesday.

Win Myint, the former president, was pardoned for two of the eight offenses for which he received convictions: sedition and violating coronavirus restrictions and sedition. The pardons cut four years from his 12-year combined prison sentence.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reacted to the pardons by reiterating his call for the immediate release of Suu Kyi and Win Myint, the U.N. deputy spokesman said.

The U.N chief also called for the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners, "an end to the violence and repression, and respect for human rights" in Myanmar, spokesman Farhan Haq said.

The clemency was announced a day after Myanmar's military extended the state of emergency it imposed when it seized power from Suu Kyi's elected government 2 1/2 years ago, forcing a further delay in elections it promised when it took over.

Several of Suu Kyi's cases are awaiting final appeals.

Min Aung Hlaing pardoned a total of 7,749 prisoners and commuted the death sentences of others to commemorate the day the Buddha gave his first sermon, the MRTV report said.

The army leader also granted amnesty to 125 foreign prisoners and 22 members of ethnic armed groups, it added. The announcement said he dropped cases against 72 people connected to ethnic armed groups.

It wasn't immediately clear if any of the released prisoners included the thousands of political detainees locked up for opposing military rule.

The justice ministry of the shadow National Unity Government, which views itself as the country's legitimate administrative body, called on the country's military rulers to immediately release all detained political prisoners including Suu Kyi, saying they were unjustly arrested and sentenced.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners — a rights monitoring organization — 24,123 people have been arrested in Myanmar since the army takeover. At least 3,857 civilians have been killed by security forces in the same period, the group says.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Taiwan detains army officer suspected of leaking military secrets to China

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan has detained an army officer and several collaborators on suspicion of handing military secrets to China. The defense ministry said Wednesday that a lieutenant colonel surnamed Hsieh and other defendants were suspected of having been recruited by China to leak national defense secrets and other information. The detentions come as military tensions between China and Taiwan continue to rise. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has run a long-standing campaign to recruit retired Taiwanese military personnel to supply state secrets in exchange for money or gifts. Hsieh is also suspected of developing a spy organization of current and retired military personnel tasked with collecting intelligence for China, according to the Taipei Times newspaper, which quoted unnamed prosecutors with Taiwan's High Prosecutors Office. The office did not immediately answer emailed questions about the case.

Powerful typhoon injures more than 30 people in Okinawa

TOKYO (AP)—A powerful typhoon slammed Okinawa and other islands in southwestern Japan Wednesday with high winds injuring more than 30 people as it moved west making its way toward mainland China. The Japan Meteorological Agency said the typhoon is heading to the East China Sea, but may change course and head back to Japan later this week. Typhoon Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, was heading west at speeds of 15 kph (9 mph), packing surface winds of up to 162 kph (100 mph). It was at sea southwest of Okinawa's main island, according to the agency. Thirty-four people were injured, with three seriously hurt, according to the Okinawa prefectural government. The typhoon damaged several homes and forced transportation to halt and stores to close as it slowly moved west. Many hospitals were only receiving emergency cases. The storm also left nearly 200,000 homes, or about 30%, of those in Okinawa, without power, according to the Okinawa Electric Power Company.

Weather in PH mountains hampers search for missing plane

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A small plane carrying a Filipino trainer pilot and an Indian student is missing in the northeastern Philippines and the search is being hampered by bad weather, civil aviation officials said Wednesday. The Cessna 152 left from Laoag city in northern Ilocos Norte province around noon Tuesday but failed to land three hours later as expected in Tuguegarao city in Cagayan province, said the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, which did not immediately identify the two people on the plane. The search efforts by the Philippine air force, army troops and other government personnel Tuesday were hampered by bad weather. A coast guard helicopter and a private helicopter cut short their search flights Wednesday due to bad weather, the civil aviation agency said. Agency spokesman Eric Apolonio told The Associated Press the plane received clearance to take off from Laoag, where the weather cleared after a typhoon passed through mountainous northern region last week.

Death toll from IS bombing at rally in Pakistan rises to 63

KHAR, Pakistan (AP)—The death toll from an Islamic State group's suicide bombing at a campaign rally over the weekend of a pro-Taliban Pakistani cleric's party rose to 63 on Wednesday, after eight people died in hospital.

Sunday's massive attack—one of the country's worst attacks in recent years—left nearly 200 wounded, several critically. The bomber struck an election campaign rally of supporters of pro-Taliban cleric Fazlur Rehman in the northwestern district of Bajur, near the border with Afghanistan and a region where the Pakistani military spent years fighting the Pakistani Taliban before declaring the district clear of militants in 2016.

Rehman's Jamiat Ulema Islam party — which is part of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's coalition government — has remained a potent political force in the region, closely linked to the Afghan Taliban.

Medical officials said 123 people remain in hospital while those with lighter wounds were treated and discharged. Liaquat Ali, a spokesman for the state-run hospital in Bajur, confirmed the latest deaths on Wednesday. He said some of the wounded were still in serious condition.

The attack has drawn international condemnation and Sharif has urged Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to do more to prevent militants from finding sanctuary there and crossing into Pakistan to stage.

An Afghan-based branch of the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the bombing. IS militants are Taliban rivals and have stepped up attacks since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021.

Sharif, after visiting some of the wounded people at a hospital in Peshawar on Tuesday, said IS militants find sanctuaries inside Afghanistan, regroup and rearm there, and subsequently infiltrat Pakistan to carry out anti-government attacks. He demanded the Afghan Taliban "undertake concrete measures toward denying their soil be used for transnational terrorism."

The Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP, is a separate militant group but allied with the Afghan Taliban. It has carried out several deadly attacks in Pakistan since last year when it ended a cease-fire with the government. The TTP denounced the Bajur bombing.

Pakistan's volatile northwest has been the scene of large attacks over the years.

A Taliban attack on an army-run school in the city of Peshawar in 2014 killed 147 people, mostly schoolchildren. In January, 74 people were killed in a bombing at a mosque in Peshawar. And in February, more than 100 people, mostly policemen, died in a mosque bombing inside Pesharwar police headquarters.

World

Israeli protesters are calling for democracy

» But what about the occupation of Palestinians?

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel is being rocked by a wave of mass protests calling for the country's democracy to be upheld. But the pro-democracy movement lacks any clear message of opposition to Israel's open-ended military rule over millions of Palestinians.

This contradiction reflects a widely held belief among Jewish Israelis that the conflict with the Palestinians is both intractable and somehow separate from Israel's internal strife.

Critics of the protest movement, including Palestinians, say this is a significant blind spot and that such selective advocacy of democratic ideals shows how disconnected Israelis are from the harsh reality of those living under Israel's occupation.

"It's so ironic that they're talking and protesting for democracy while at the same time it's been a dictatorship for Palestinians for 75 years," said Diana Buttu, a Palestinian commentator. "They're afraid that their own privileges and rights are going to somehow be affected, but they won't make the connection" with the occupation.

AP

Demonstrators wave the Israeli and Palestinian flags during a protest against plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to overhaul the judicial system, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Saturday, July 22, 2023.

The protesters are demonstrating against the drive of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to weaken the judiciary by limiting judicial oversight on official decision-making and legislation.

The protest movement says its limited message against the judicial overhaul is holding together one of the largest and most sustained protest movements Israel has ever seen, bringing tens of thousands of people to the streets for the last 30 weeks.

Netanyahu's government, made up of ultranationalist and ultra-religious parties with close ties to the West Bank settler movement, says the overhaul will restore power to elected lawmakers and rein in what it says is an overly interventionist judicial system.

Critics see the legislative push, especially because it's driven by far-right and conservative religious parties, as an assault on Israel's democratic fundamentals and its weak system of checks and balances. They say it will open the door to serious infringements on personal liberties and the rights of women, the LGBTQ+ community and minorities that will set Israel on a path toward autocracy.

The protesters come from a wide swath of Israeli society. They chant "democracy or rebellion!" carry signs reading "Israel will remain a democracy," and have unfurled a giant copy of the country's declaration of independence, which serves as an unofficial bill of rights, at various events.

But largely missing from the raucous protests is any meaningful reference to Israel's 56-year occupation of lands the Palestinians seek for their future state. A small contingent of activists waving Palestinian flags have taken part, but remain mostly on the fringe.

In some cases, they have even been ostracized by organizers who feared that mentioning the occupation would somehow undercut the protest movement. Israel's Palestinian citizens, who make up a fifth of the population, have sat out the protests in part because the demonstrations are ignoring the occupation.

"The protest is against the reduction of the democratic space for Jews. Most Jews in Israel don't have a problem with Israel enforcing an apartheid regime in the West Bank," said Dror Etkes, a veteran anti-occupation activist.

Despite his concerns, Etkes has made a point of participating in the protests. He sees the absence of occupation-related themes as a strategy meant to unite disparate groups against a more imminent threat. He said that if the government has its way, "people like me won't be able to protest" against the occupation.

Rights group reports war crimes in Sudan

CAIRO (AP)—Sudan's warring parties have committed extensive war crimes in the ongoing conflict, including deliberate killings of civilians and sexual assault, a leading rights group said Thursday.

The east African country plunged into chaos in mid-April when monthslong tensions between the military and a powerful paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, exploded into open fighting in the capital of Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country.

Amnesty International's 56-page report said civilians were killed and wounded in targeted attacks. The group also reported women being raped, with some held in conditions "amounting to sexual slavery" mostly in the capital, Khartoum, and the western region of Darfur.

"Sexual violence has been a defining element of this conflict since the beginning," Donatella Rovera, co-author of the report, told The Associated Press. "Civilians really have no good options. It's difficult for them to leave. It's incredibly dangerous for them to stay."

Almost all rape cases were blamed on the RSF and its allied Arab militias. The report said the RSF abducted 24 women and girls - as young as 12- and held them "for several days during which they were raped by several RSF members."

Rovera said that war crimes such as sexual assault are happening, "on what seems to be a large scale."

The RSF, which evolved from the notorious Janjaweed militias, was also blamed for most of the deliberate attacks, Amnesty said. Some members of the military were also accused of the crimes, the report said.

Responding to the report, the military said it had established a unit to try to minimize civilian harm while the RSF denied allegations of sexual violence, as well as carrying out violent acts in West Darfur.

The conflict has turned Khartoum and other urban areas into battlefields. Darfur —which had been the scene of genocidal war in the early 2000s—saw some of the worst bouts of violence with the current fighting turning into ethnic clashes.

The fighting forced about 4 million people to flee their homes, either to safer areas inside Sudan or to neighboring countries, according to the U.N. migration agency.

The violence in Darfur was mostly blamed on the RSF and its allied Arab militias which the group said targeted the African Masalit community in the region. The group said armed men from the Masalit allegedly also targeted Arabs suspected of siding with militias.

Amnesty detailed waves of violence in West Darfur province—one of five constituting the Darfur region—including the killing of civilians, looting and destruction of homes and facilities such as the main hospital and markets.

Russian drone strikes hit Ukrainian port on Romania's border

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russian drones on Wednesday hit a Ukrainian port city along the border with Romania, causing significant damage and a huge fire at facilities that are key to Ukrainian grain exports.

The attacks followed the end of a deal with Russia that had allowed Ukrainian shipments to world markets from the Black Sea port of Odesa. Since scrapping the deal, Russia has hammered the country's ports with strikes, compounding the blow to the key industry. In the past two weeks, dozens of drones and missile attacks have targeted the port of Odesa and the region's river ports, which are being used as alternative routes.

The head of the Ukrainian president's office, Andriy Yermak, said the city of Izmail, on the Danube River that forms part of the Ukraine-Romania border, was hit in the strikes.

Video obtained by The Associated Press showed explosions and a large fire in the distance on the Danube, captured by fishermen in Romania, a NATO member, on the other side of the river.

Three Ukrainian ports along the Danube are currently operating.

"The goal of the enemy was clearly the facilities of the ports and industrial infrastructure of the region," Ukraine's South operational command wrote in an update on Facebook. As a result of the attack, a fire broke out at industrial and port facilities, and a grain elevator was damaged.

Ukrainian infrastructure minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said that about 40,000 metric tons (44,000 tons) of grain, which had been expected by countries in Africa, China and Israel, was damaged in the attack.

Separately, Ukraine's air force intercepted 23 Iranian-made Shahed drones fired by Russia over the country overnight, mostly in Odesa and Kyiv, according to a morning update.

All 10 drones fired at Kyiv were intercepted, said Serhii Popko, the head of Kyiv City Administration. Numerous loud explosions were heard overnight as air defense systems were activated. Debris from felled drones hit three districts of the capital, damaging a nonresidential building, Popko said.

"Russian terrorists have once again targeted ports, grain facilities and global food security," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted Wednesday morning on Telegram. "The world must respond."

He confirmed that some drones hit their targets, with the most "significant damage" in the south of Ukraine.

Wheat prices rose about 3% and corn prices nearly 2% on Wednesday in Chicago trading following the new attacks, before erasing those spikes and trading down. It showed the continued volatility in world markets as Russia targets Ukraine's ports and agricultural infrastructure.

Off The Wall

Willy the Texas rodeo goat, on the lam for weeks, is finally found safe

HOUSTON (AP)—Willy the rodeo goat, who has lassoed the hearts of residents in a rural South Texas county ever since she escaped from an arena enclosure July 15, has been found.

The elusive goat had hidden in sugar cane and corn fields, avoiding capture for weeks in Willacy County, about 300 miles (483 km) southwest of Houston. Residents searched for her on horses, all-terrain vehicles and by drone. Local businesses aided the search by donating 90 prizes and gifts worth $5,000 in total—including brisket, bales of hay and beef jerky—to be given to whoever found her.

Ricardo Rojas III didn't have to go far to find Willy. He and a friend caught the slippery goat on Monday in his backyard, about 1 mile (1.6 km) away from where she escaped.

The 16-year-old high school junior and family friend Sammy Ambriz were fixing animal stalls on the teenager's 10-acre (4-hectare) family property located between Raymondville and Lyford in deep South Texas when there was a Willy sighting.

Neighbors had possibly seen the goat, so Rojas' father told him to grab some ropes. Rojas used one of his family's goats and its cries to try and lure Willy out of the heavily wooded area behind his family's property.

They soon spotted Willy coming out of the woods and chased her when she ran back into the trees, Rojas said. They cornered her, and both Rojas and Ambriz unsuccessfully tried to lasso Willy.

"And then she started to run again. But luckily, we had a fence that was there, and she tried to hop the fence, but then her head got stuck in the fence," Rojas said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "Me and Sammy jumped on top of her. At that point, she wasn't going nowhere."

Alison Savage, president of the Willacy County Livestock Show and Fair, said they believed Willy was getting enough to eat and drink while she was on the lam but worried that predators, including coyotes, might get her.

"We had her checked over just to make sure that she is getting healthy," Savage said. "We plan to let ol' Miss Willy lead a very sweet life going forward."

When Willy first escaped, she hadn't yet been named. During the search, the livestock show had been posting updates on its Facebook page, and an online poll on the page christened her Willy. Officials had not been sure whether Willy was a boy or girl, Savage said.

People from around the U.S. had reached out asking for updates and sending their wishes for Willy's safe return.

The search also brought together many of Willacy County's 20,000 residents, many who grow crops and raise livestock, as families went out to search for Willy.

"I think it was very awesome that everybody was working together to try to find her," said Rojas, who is splitting the prizes with Ambriz.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Our bears are real, Chinese zoo says, denying they are 'humans in disguise'

BEIJING (AP)—A zoo in eastern China is denying suggestions some of its bears might be people in costumes after photos of the animals standing like humans circulated online. The sun bears from Malaysia are smaller than other bears and look different but are the real thing, the Hangzhou Zoo said Monday on its social media account. "Some people think I stand like a person," said the posting, written from the bear's point of view. "It seems you don't understand me very well." An employee who answered the phone at the zoo declined to talk about the bears but said visits were being arranged for reporters Monday to see them. Internet users questioned whether the zoo's bears were real after photos circulated showing one standing upright on slender hind legs. "Because of the way they stand, some people online question whether they are 'humans in disguise,'" the newspaper Hangzhou Daily said. Sun bears are the size of large dogs, standing at most 1.3 meters (50 inches) tall on their hind legs, compared with up to 2.8 meters (9 feet) for grizzlies and other species, according to the zoo. Other Chinese zoos have been accused of trying to pass off dogs dyed to look like wolves or African cats, and donkeys painted to look like zebras.

In summer heat, bear spotted in Southern California backyard Jacuzzi

BURBANK, Calif. (AP)—With the summer heat wave in full swing in Southern California, a backyard pool is a tempting place to take a dip. Even for a bear. Police in the city of Burbank responded to a report of a bear sighting in a residential neighborhood and found the animal sitting in a Jacuzzi behind one of the homes. After a short dip, the bear climbed over a wall and headed to a tree behind the home, police said in a statement Friday. Police released a video of the animal in the neighborhood, which is about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of Los Angeles and near the Verdugo Mountains. The Burbank police have issued warnings for residents to avoid bears and to keep all garbage and food locked up to discourage bears from coming to their residences.

Somalian sports minister apologizes after slow 100-meter runner goes viral at university games

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—Somalia's sports minister publicly apologized Wednesday and ordered that the chairwoman of the national track and field federation be suspended after a seemingly untrained female sprinter represented the African country at the World University Games in China and took more than 20 seconds to finish a 100-meter race. Minister of Youth and Sports Mohamed Barre Mohamud said his ministry did not know how 20-year-old Nasra Abukar Ali was selected to compete in the women's 100 at the student games in Chengdu on Tuesday. The ministry separately released a statement directing the Somalia Olympic Committee to suspend national athletics federation chairwoman Khadija Aden Dahir amid allegations that Nasra Abukar was a relative of hers and was given the chance to compete at the games because of that. Somalia's university union said it had not sent any runners to China as part of an official Somali team. A video of the agonizingly slow run by Nasra Abukar was shared across social media and Mohamud said that the performance was embarrassing for Somalia. In her qualifying race, Nasra Abukar was immediately left behind by the other runners and finished about 10 seconds after the winner. Despite being dead last, she did a little skip in the air as she crossed the finish line.

Science & Technology

Heaviest animal ever may be ancient whale

AP

Visitors and journalists attend a presentation introducing a newly found species named Perucetus colossus, or "the colossal whale from Peru", in Lima, Peru, Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2023.

NEW YORK (AP)—There could be a new contender for heaviest animal to ever live. While today's blue whale has long held the title, scientists have dug up fossils from an ancient giant that could tip the scales.

Researchers described the species—named Perucetus colossus, or "the colossal whale from Peru"—in the journal Nature on Wednesday. Each vertebra weighs over 220 pounds (100 kilograms) and its ribs measure nearly 5 feet (1.4 meters) long.

"It's just exciting to see such a giant animal that's so different from anything we know," said Hans Thewissen, a paleontologist at Northeast Ohio Medical University who had no role in the research.

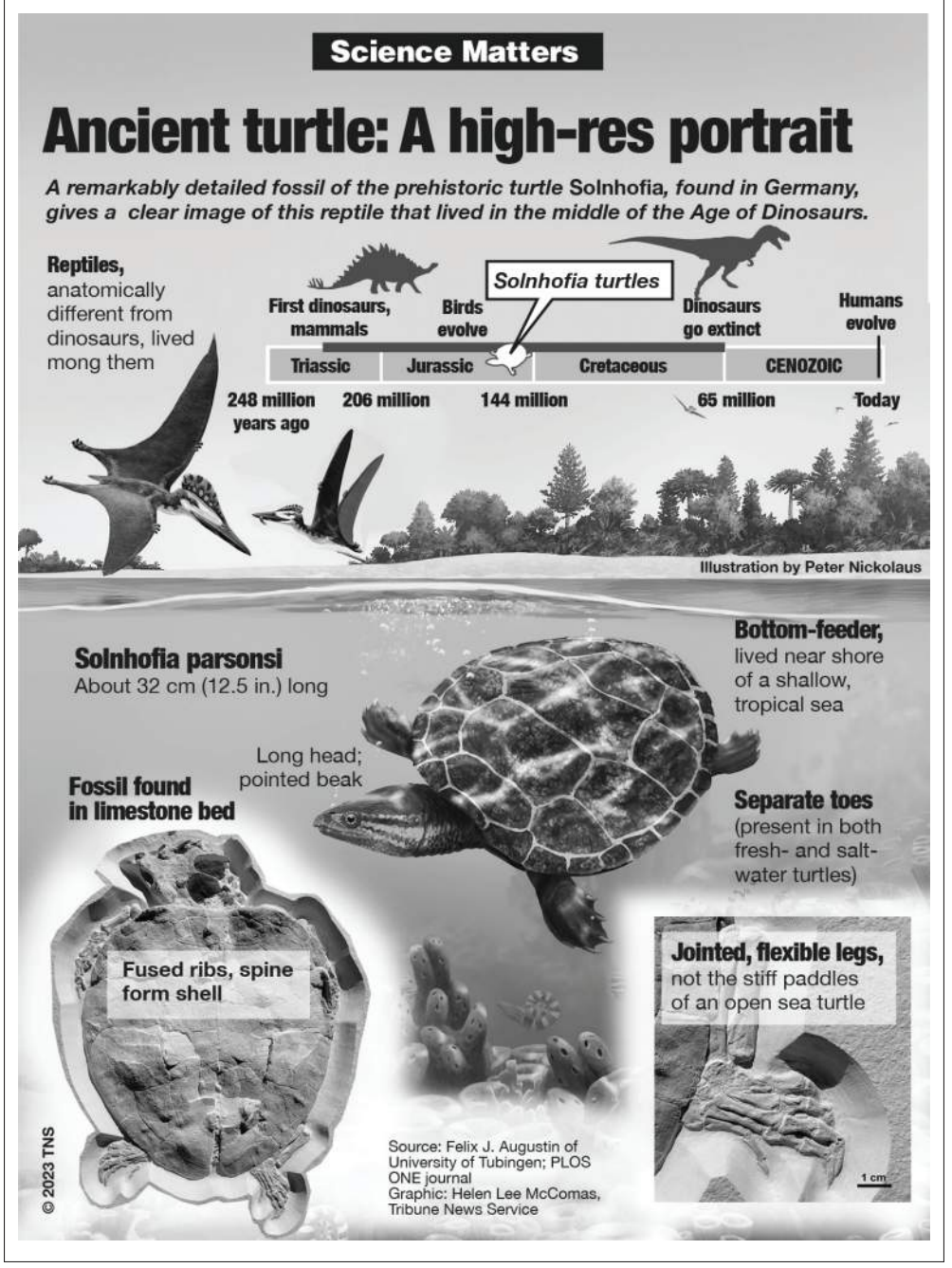
The bones were discovered more than a decade ago by Mario Urbina from the University of San Marcos' Natural History Museum in Lima. An international team spent years digging them out from the side of a steep, rocky slope in the Ica desert, a region in Peru that was once underwater and is known for its rich marine fossils. The results: 13 vertebrae from the whale's backbone, four ribs and a hip bone.

The massive fossils, which are 39 million years old, "are unlike anything I've ever seen," said study author Alberto Collareta, a paleontologist at Italy's University of Pisa.

After the excavations, the researchers used 3D scanners to study the surface of the bones and drilled into them to peek inside. They used the huge—but incomplete—skeleton to estimate the whale's size and weight, using modern marine mammals for comparison, said study author Eli Amson, a paleontologist at the State Museum of Natural History in Stuttgart, Germany.

They calculated that the ancient giant weighed somewhere between 94 and 375 tons (85 and 340 metric tons). The biggest blue whales found have been within that range—at around 200 tons (180 metric tons).

Its body stretched to around 66 feet (20 meters) long. Blue whales can be longer—with some growing to more than 100 feet (30 meters) in length.


Science Matters
Ancient turtle: A high-res portrait
A remarkably detailed fossil of the prehistoric turtle Solnhofia, found in Germany, gives a clear image of this reptile that lived in the middle of the Age of Dinosaurs.
Reptiles, anatomically different from dinosaurs, lived mong them
First dinosaurs, mammals
Birds evolve
Solnhofia turtles
Dinosaurs go extinct
Humans evolve
Triassic
Jurassic
Cretaceous
CENOZOIC
248 million years ago
206 million
144 million
65 million
Today
Illustration by Peter Nickolaus
Solnhofia parsonsi
About 32 cm (12.5 in.) long
Bottom-feeder, lived near shore of a shallow, tropical sea
Long head; pointed beak
Fossil found in limestone bed
Separate toes (present in both fresh- and salt-water turtles)
Fused ribs, spine form shell
Jointed, flexible legs, not the stiff paddles of an open sea turtle
1 cm
© 2023 TNS
Source: Felix J. Augustin of University of Tubingen; PLOS ONE journal
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Life & Style

Canadian PM Justin Trudeau and his wife separating after 18 years of marriage

TORONTO (AP)—Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife, Sophie, are separating after 18 years of marriage.

The two said in statements posted on Instagram that they made the decision after "many meaningful and difficult conversations." A statement from the prime minister's office said they both have signed a legal separation agreement.

Trudeau, the 51-year-old scion of one of Canada's most famous politicians, was sworn into office in 2015. Sophie Trudeau is a former model and TV host. The couple were married in 2005. Together, they brought star power to the prime minister's office and appeared in the pages of Vogue magazine.

They have three children, 15-year-old Xavier, 14-year-old Ella-Grace and 9-year-old Hadrien.

"As always, we remain a close family with deep love and respect for each other and for everything we have built and will continue to build," the two said on Instagram.

An official familiar with the matter said Trudeau will continue to live at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa, where he has lived since 2015, and the children will primarily live there to maintain stability.

The official said she has moved to a separate Ottawa home, but will spend time at Rideau Cottage at times including when he is travelling. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

JUSTIN TANG/AP

FILE — Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife, Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, arrive at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Ontario, Sept. 11, 2019.

She has played a less visible role in recent years, rarely traveling with the prime minister on official trips. The two were seen together publicly at Canada Day events in Ottawa last month.

"They remain a close family, and Sophie and the prime minister are focused on raising their kids in a safe, loving and collaborative environment," the statement from Trudeau's office said. "The family will be together on vacation, beginning next week."

His office requested respect for their privacy.

Justin Trudeau and Sophie Gregoire met as children when she was a classmate of his youngest brother, Michel, and they reconnected as adults when they co-hosted a 2003 charity gala.

Trudeau is the second prime minister to announce a separation while in office.

His father, Pierre Trudeau, and mother, Margaret Trudeau, separated in 1977 and divorced in 1984 during the elder Trudeau's final year in the prime minister's office.

Margaret Trudeau wrote in her memoir that she had a romance with Senator Ted Kennedy. During a 1977 visit to Washington, D.C. with Pierre, she sat listening to her husband's speech before Congress while feeling "torn between an intense need for him and a longing for Ted Kennedy." Margaret wrote she became infatuated with Kennedy after meeting him a few years earlier.

Driver to be charged with negligence in crash that killed actor Treat Williams

DORSET, Vt. (AP)—A Vermont driver will be charged with gross negligence in the crash that killed actor Treat Williams, officials said.

An investigation of the June 12 crash in Dorset concluded a vehicle pulled in front of Williams, who was riding a motorcycle and was unable to avoid a collision, Vermont State Police said Tuesday.

The driver, Ryan Koss, 35, of Dorset, was issued a citation Tuesday evening for grossly negligent operation causing death, state police said. He was released and ordered to appear in court in September to be formally charged.

A court official couldn't say whether Koss had a lawyer, and Koss didn't immediately return an email message seeking comment.

Williams, 71, of Manchester Center, was pronounced dead at Albany Medical Center in New York.

Richard Treat Williams' nearly 50-year career included starring roles in the TV series "Everwood" and the movie "Hair." He appeared in more than 120 TV and film roles, including the movies "The Eagle Has Landed," "Prince of the City" and "Once Upon a Time in America."

Lighthouse featured in 'Forrest Gump' goes dark after lightning strike

PORT CLYDE, Maine (AP)—Lightning has knocked out a lighthouse on the Maine coast that was featured in the movie "Forrest Gump."

The Marshall Point lighthouse, established in 1832, has been dark since Thursday when a lightning strike took out the light and foghorn, and damaged the associated circuitry, said Nat Lyon, director of the Marshall Point Lighthouse and Museum.

"It fried everything. It fried the light, the circuit breakers, the foghorn," Lyon said Wednesday. "At this point we have a lightless lighthouse until the Coast Guard can effect the repairs."

A tenant living in the keeper's house reported a "tremendous crash" and noticed the light was out after the lightning strike, Lyon said. Coast Guard Station Southwest Harbor, which is responsible for the navigational aid, removed the light for repairs on Monday and is still working on getting the foghorn working, he said. The Coast Guard didn't respond to messages from The Associated Press.

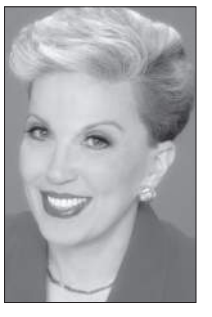
The lighthouse was featured in the 1994 movie, "Forrest Gump."

Gump, the main character from the movie, was on a cross-country run when he jogged down a wooden gangway to the lighthouse, signaling he'd reached the East Coast. But the character played by actor Tom Hanks didn't stop there. He kept running.

The lighthouse, which is topped with a lightning rod, was undamaged and will be open to the public on National Lighthouse Day on Aug. 7. People can climb the stairs to reach the top but there will be no light, Lyon said.

Pair's breakup leads to even split of parenting

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: Five months ago, my relationship of 10 years ended. I discovered my boyfriend had been unfaithful on more than one occasion. He didn't want to fix the relationship, and I could no longer take more of his mental and emotional abuse.

My biggest hurdle is our children, who are 3 and 6. I have done everything for them since they were born. My ex and I verbally agreed on a 50-50 schedule, so I have gone from being with them every day to half that time, and I hate it. I miss them terribly when they aren't with me. My anxiety and worry have skyrocketed.

I want to do what's best for my kids, and I struggle daily with worrying if what I am doing is best. Is it best for them to be with their dad half the time when he hasn't been around much these past two years? I have talked to a lawyer, who said it's up to me since we were never married. Friends and family have told me to give Dad only every other weekend, but is that truly what's best for them?

I don't know what to do and feel so lost. It would be easier for me if their dad had only every other weekend. However, this decision isn't about me. How do I know if what I'm doing is best for my kids?

MOMMY OF TWO IN MINNESOTA

DEAR MOMMY: The answer to your question depends on how involved with the children their father is when they are with him. Does he talk to them, read to them, make sure they are clean, dressed, properly fed and getting enough exercise? Is his home clean and smoke-free? If the answer to any of these questions is no, the children need to be with the parent who will give them not only the best of care, but love them and let them know it every day.

To his credit, your ex appears to be stepping up to the plate. And you are right—this isn't just about you and your own needs. I applaud you for recognizing it.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A year ago, my landlord asked me to move out of an apartment that I loved. I could no longer afford the rent, so I asked my son if I could live with him. He agreed without hesitation. Two weeks later, I packed up and moved.

At first, it was comfortable, but things started to change when I had emergency open-heart surgery. My granddaughter announced that she was moving in as well. Then here she comes with her boyfriend, expecting him to live there, too. My son refused at first but changed his mind. That's when the constant screaming started.

Her boyfriend has a bad attitude. He bullies me when nobody is at home. Neither one works. They live on my son's income. I'm running low on patience and strength. I'm 77. All I would like is to get better and have some peace and quiet. What do I do? Can you advise me?

TRAPPED IN FLORIDA

DEAR TRAPPED: Because the stress is becoming too much for you, explain to your son what is going on when he is absent. Then start looking for an alternative living situation you will be able to manage within your budget. If it means renting a room somewhere rather than an apartment, be prepared to do it. Your health must come first.

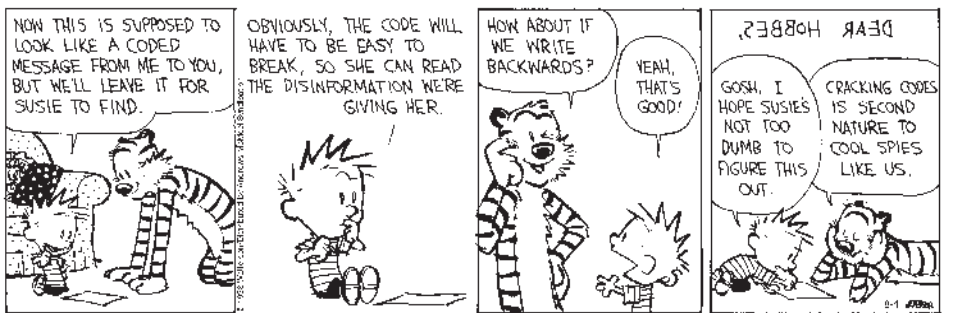
■■■

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

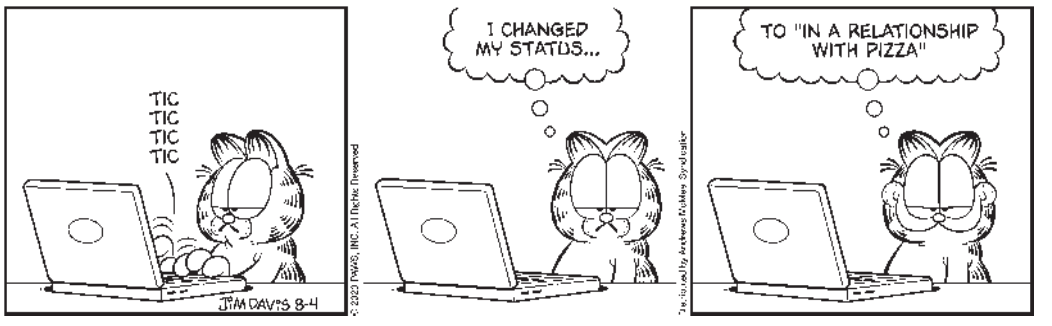
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


NOW THIS IS SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE A CODED MESSAGE FROM ME TO YOU, BUT WE'LL LEAVE IT FOR SUSIE TO FIND.
OBVIOUSLY, THE CODE WILL HAVE TO BE EASY TO BREAK, SO SHE CAN READ THE DISINFORMATION WE'RE GIVING HER.
HOW ABOUT IF WE WRITE BACKWARDS?
YEAH, THAT'S GOOD!
DEAR HOBBES,
GOSH, I HOPE SUSIE'S NOT TOO DUMB TO FIGURE THIS OUT.
CRACKING CODES IS SECOND NATURE TO COOL SPIES LIKE US.

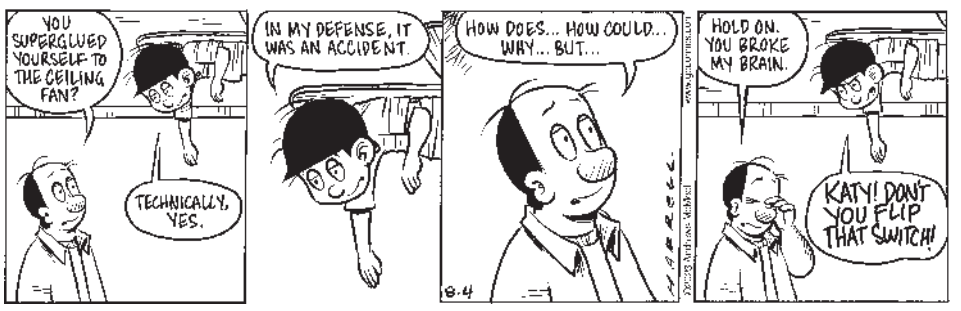
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



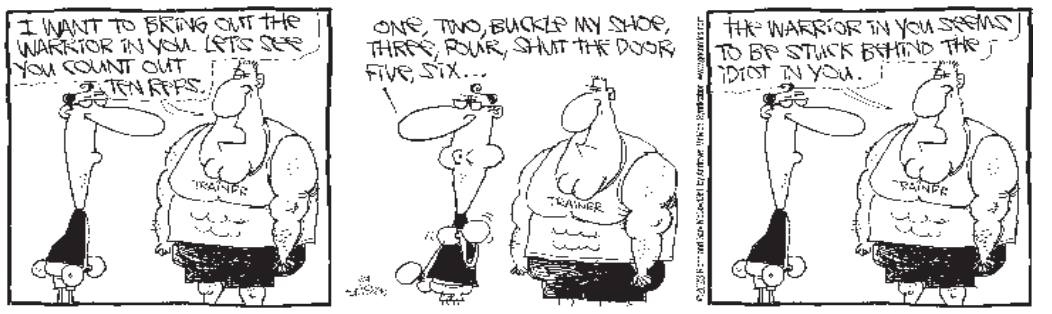
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOU SUPERGLUED YOURSELF TO THE CEILING FAN?
TECHNICALLY, YES.
IN MY DEFENSE, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
HOW DOES... HOW COULD... WHY... BUT...
8-4
HOLD ON. YOU BROKE MY BRAIN.
KATY! DON'T YOU FLIP THAT SWITCH!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I WANT TO BRING OUT THE WARRIOR IN YOU. LET'S SEE YOU COUNT OUT TEN REPS.
ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE, THREE, FOUR, SHUT THE DOOR FIVE, SIX...
THE WARRIOR IN YOU SEEMS TO BE STUCK BEHIND THE IDIOT IN YOU.
TRAINER

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 IV measures
4 Pack cargo
8 Theatergoer's souvenir
12 Desk wood
13 "Downton Abbey" countess
14 Atmosphere
15 Garage entrance
17 Unsightly
18 Skiing style
19 Victory
21 Its cap. is Brussels
22 Advil alternative
26 Leaves
29 Mork's planet
30 Oklahoma city
31 Has the flu
32 Bankroll
33 Ready, as for surgery
34 Writer Tarbell
35 Yoga pad
36 Spanish snacks
37 Chef Gordon
39 "Awesome, dude!"
40 Chum
41 Firstborn
45 Andean land
48 Common trash can spot
50 Done with
51 Pro votes
52 Wapiti
53 June honorees
54 Eyelid woe
55 Numbered rd.

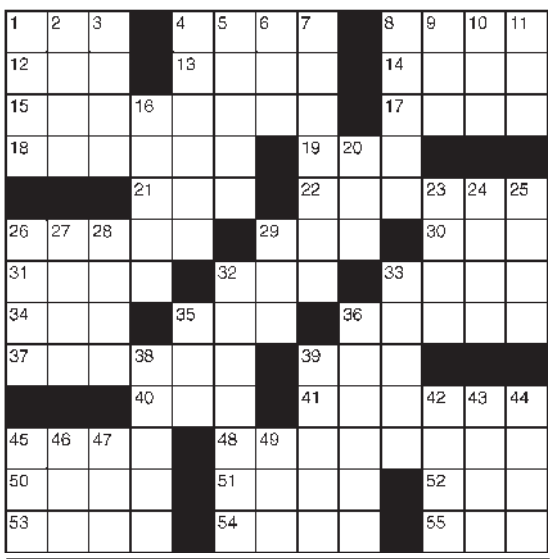
DOWN

1 Musical finale
2 Track star Lewis
3 Omit
4 Act parts
5 Beach accessory
6 — pro nobis
7 Ungovernable
8 Place for sweaters?
9 Towboat
10 Internet address
11 Inlet
16 Feelings, informally
20 Squid squirt
23 Kvetch
24 Concept
25 Siestas
26 Twosome
27 Verdi heroine
28 Glitzy rock genre
29 Feedbag morsel
32 Ambushes
33 Rice field
35 Goat's cry
36 "Honor Thy Father" author
38 Eggs on
39 Pass along
42 Pitcher
43 Bagel seasoning
44 Youngster
45 Group of whales
46 Longoria of TV
47 Flushed
49 Permit

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	I	R	S	■	C	A	C	II	■	A	E	R
P	O	S	H	■	L	O	R	I	■	U	T	E
A	U	T	O	P	I	L	O	T	■	T	A	B
T	S	U	R	I	S	■	■	M	O	O	L	A
■	■	E	T	■	S	T	E	A	M	■	■	■
A	M	A	S	■	C	H	O	■	F	A	D	S
I	A	U	■	■	H	A	I	■	■	I	A	O
M	O	T	H	■	A	G	O	■	A	S	S	T
■	■	O	A	S	I	S	■	P	C	■	■	■
R	E	L	I	C	■	■	Y	U	C	C	A	S
E	L	O	■	A	U	T	O	G	R	A	P	H
A	K	A	■	B	R	E	W	■	U	L	E	E
M	S	N	■	S	I	L	L	■	E	L	S	A

Yesterday's answer 8-4



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Cole Sprouse, 31; Dylan Sprouse, 31; Meghan Markle, 42; Barack Obama, 62.

Happy Birthday: Simplify your life. Take part in events and activities that soothe your soul. Maintenance is the name of the game, and taking the path that offers peace of mind and stability will be of help. Don't share too much information until you have everything in place and pass the point where interference might become problematic. Honor your beliefs, and live life your way. Your numbers are 8, 11, 21, 25, 37, 39, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Socialize, but don't let temptation get the best of you. Monitor your intake and do what's affordable and physically within your means. Too much of anything will put a damper on your day. Make personal growth, self-improvement and love your priorities. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't labor over things you cannot change. Look beyond the negative and develop a positive alternative that is within budget. A personal plan will reveal something unexpected, leaving you with more options than anticipated. A challenge will turn in your favor. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You'll face unusual barriers when dealing with others. Watch out for anyone who is using manipulative tactics to steer you in the wrong direction. If you don't feel comfortable, take a different path. Be honest, and demand the same from others. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't hesitate when you can accomplish plenty. Use your imagination, and you'll devise unique ways to outdo yourself and anyone who tries to step in and take over. Step into the spotlight and show everyone what you have to offer. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Tidy up loose ends before someone can object or disrupt your plans. Don't take on too much or make promises you cannot keep. Be resourceful, use your intuition and make calls based on experience and knowledge. You will succeed. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Discuss your intentions with those you want to include in your plans or with an expert who can help decide how to move forward. Don't let physical changes disturb you or disrupt your plans. Be secretive regarding personal matters and beliefs. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't sit idle when you can make a difference. Let your actions speak for you and you'll gain momentum. Be observant and you'll discover who shares your beliefs. Changing plans will cost you. Don't let temptation be your downfall. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Use your intuition and intelligence to wiggle your way into a leadership position. You can make a difference by taking the high road and marking a just path. Don't believe everything you hear; ask questions and stick to the facts. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Do what makes you happy. Don't follow the crowd or let others choose for you. Listen, but don't get involved in impossible battles. Give others the same freedom you expect in return. The only person in charge of your happiness is you. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Don't stop believing in yourself and your ability to reach your destination. The journey will be informative, and the people you meet will offer insight into possibilities that can change how you use your attributes and earn a living. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take the most inviting path and put yourself first for a change. If someone chooses to head in a direction, wish them well. Make your health, emotional well-being, and the activities and events that make you happy your priorities. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Set high standards and stick to your plan. An opportunity will develop that is too good to refuse. Make the necessary adjustments, take advantage of what's available and high-tail it to the finish line. Embrace new beginnings, and don't look back. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are detailed, responsive and chic. You are contemplative and masterful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5			9				7	
	4				5			
			4	3				
		1						6
9					1		8	3
		2			8	7	1	
	1			5				4
		4			6		5	
	9			8	4		6	

Difficulty: ★★★★ 8/4

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	9	2	3	1	8	7	6	5
3	7	1	5	6	9	8	4	2
8	6	5	7	4	2	9	1	3
2	5	4	6	7	1	3	9	8
6	8	3	9	5	4	2	7	1
9	1	7	8	2	3	4	5	6
7	3	8	1	9	5	6	2	4
5	4	6	2	8	7	1	3	9
1	2	9	4	3	6	5	8	7

Difficulty: ★★★ 8/3

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

REMOVING YOUR APPENDIX — Solution: 8 letters

O	N	O	I	T	C	E	F	N	I	R	S	I	S	A
G	N	I	V	L	O	S	E	R	D	E	N	I	P	N
R	A	S	P	E	T	R	V	E	V	F	G	P	E	T
E	O	N	E	H	C	U	E	E	L	N	E	T	C	I
C	S	T	G	T	L	N	R	A	S	N	U	M	I	B
U	U	I	C	R	N	E	M	O	D	B	A	A	A	I
R	R	S	A	O	E	E	G	I	E	X	Ⓣ	S	L	O
R	G	S	U	O	D	N	C	M	E	L	Ⓢ	S	I	T
E	E	U	S	T	S	I	O	H	O	E	Ⓔ	V	S	I
N	R	E	E	E	T	T	S	U	R	N	Ⓡ	V	T	C
T	Y	S	S	I	U	S	M	E	S	O	O	A	A	S
S	T	A	S	G	M	E	R	U	G	T	N	U	C	N
I	C	A	D	R	M	E	R	U	C	A	R	I	S	I
D	F	I	O	C	Y	S	T	I	C	E	T	U	C	A
E	M	F	L	A	R	E	U	P	Y	H	C	S	H	P

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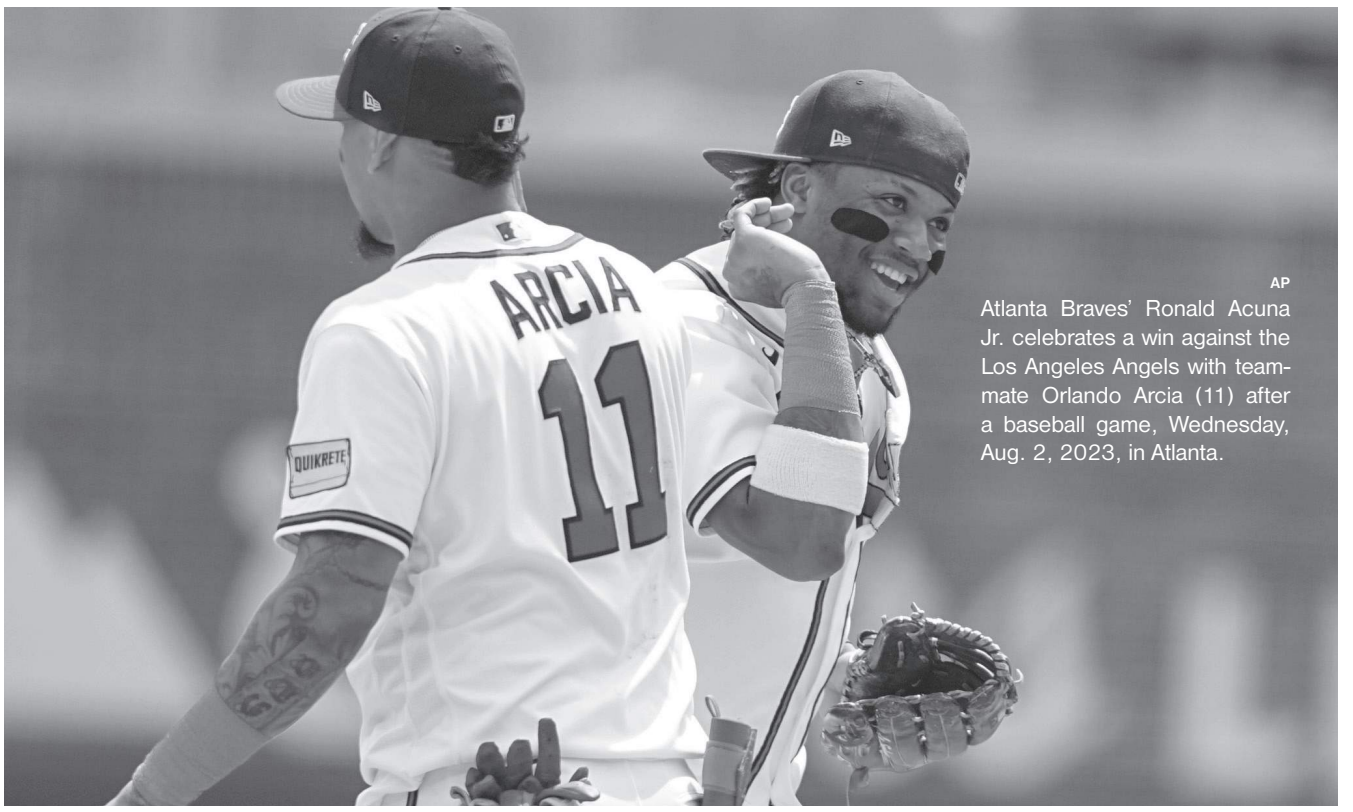
Acuña, Riley and Olson homer as Braves rout Angels, 12-5

ATLANTA (AP)—Ronald Acuña Jr., Austin Riley and Matt Olson homered for the MLB-leading Atlanta Braves, who kept up their power barrage with a 12-5 rout of the Los Angeles Angels on Wednesday.

Acuña launched a three-run shot over the center-field wall off Lucas Giolito (6-8) in the third inning, then Riley and Olson went back to back in the fourth to cap a six-run outburst that finished off the Angels' starter.

The Braves hit seven homers in taking two of three from the Angels, with the long ball accounting for 11 of their 18 runs. Through 106 games, Atlanta has 206 homers—on pace for 315 for the season, which would best the major league record of 307 set by the 2019 Minnesota Twins.

Yonny Chirinos (5-4), making his second start for the Braves since being acquired after Tampa Bay designated him for assignment, pitched five strong innings before being lifted after the first two batters singled in the sixth.



AP

Atlanta Braves' Ronald Acuna Jr. celebrates a win against the Los Angeles Angels with teammate Orlando Arcia (11) after a baseball game, Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2023, in Atlanta.

BLUE JAYS 4, ORIOLES 1

TORONTO (AP)—Brandon Belt reached base three times and scored twice and Toronto snapped a five-game home losing streak against American League-leading Baltimore.

Left-hander Yusei Kikuchi pitched six innings to win back-to-back starts. Kikuchi (9-3) allowed one run and six hits.

Yimi García pitched the seventh inning and Jordan Hicks worked the eighth for Toronto. Erik Swanson finished for his third save in four chances, picking off rookie Jordan Westburg at first base for the final out.

The Blue Jays broke a 1-1 tie with a three-run sixth that featured more bruises than base hits.

YANKEES 7, RAYS 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Giancarlo Stanton homered and drove in four runs to lead Gerrit Cole and New York past Tampa Bay, preventing a three-game sweep.

Cole (10-2) recovered from a rocky start and beat Shane McClanahan (11-2) in a marquee matchup of All-Star aces. New York scored five times in the third inning, highlighted by rookie Anthony Volpe's two-run homer and Stanton's three-run shot.

Stanton added a run-scoring single in the seventh to match his season high for RBIs. He also had four on July 15 in Colorado.

New York finished with 13 hits and scored its seventh run when Gleyber Torres came home on a double steal.

Cole allowed two runs and four hits in seven innings. He struck out eight, walked two and improved to 6-0 after a Yankees loss this season.

DODGERS 10, ATHLETICS 1

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mookie Betts hit his 29th homer, Freddie Freeman went 3 for 4 and Los Angeles routed the lowly Oakland.

Betts launched a 436-foot shot into the left-field pavilion off Hogan Harris (2-6) for his 70th RBI in the second, when the Dodgers scored four runs to lead 7-0. Betts doubled leading off the first and struck out before getting the rest of the night off in the top of the fourth.

Freeman hit his major league-leading 37th and 38th doubles and singled. He scored twice and drove in another run before being pulled in the seventh.

RANGERS 11, WHITE SOX 1

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Dane Dunning had a career-high 11 strikeouts, All-Star shortstop Corey Seager hit a two-run homer in his first at-bat coming off the injured list and Texas beat Chicago to maintain its slim lead in the AL West.

Dunning (9-4) had retired 20 batters in a row, the last five of those strikeouts, before No. 9 hitter Seby Zavala's two-out homer in the eighth inning for Chicago's first runs in three games. That was only the third hit allowed by Dunning, who walked only one against his former team.

The Rangers went ahead to stay on Seager's 16th homer in the first inning off Dylan Cease (4-5). Seager added an RBI single for the first of five runs the Rangers scored in the second.

Marcus Semien and Josh Jung also hit two-run homers for Texas (62-46).

ASTROS 3, GUARDIANS 2

HOUSTON (AP)—Chas McCormick hit a two-run homer in the second and a tiebreaking shot in the sixth, leading Houston to a series sweep over Cleveland.

The victory comes a day after Framber Valdez threw the 16th no-hitter in franchise history in a 2-0 win Tuesday night.

It's the third multi-homer game of McCormick's career and second this season.

Phil Maton (3-3) allowed one hit in the sixth and picked up the win. Ryan Pressly earned his 26th save.

GIANTS 4, DIAMONDBACKS 2

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—J.D. Davis hit a go-ahead two-run double in the sixth inning to back Logan Webb's first win in five starts and San Francisco overcame an early two-run deficit to beat Arizona.

Webb (9-9) struck out five and walked one, allowing two runs on four hits over seven innings to snap a four-start winless stretch in which he was 0-2 since beating Colorado on July 9. Webb had just one win over his previous six outings.

The Giants hit three straight singles off Tyler Gilbert (0-2) to begin the sixth—from Wilmer Flores, Joc Pederson and Patrick Bailey—and load the bases for Davis.

MARLINS 9, PHILLIES 8, 12 INNINGS

MIAMI (AP)—Jesús Sánchez hit a bases-loaded single with no outs in the 12th inning as Miami rallied from a five-run deficit and came back twice in extra innings to beat Philadelphia in a matchup of NL wild-card contenders.

The Marlins faced a 5-0 deficit going into the bottom of the sixth inning, but forced extra innings when Jorge Soler slugged a solo homer with one out in the ninth. Josh Bell and Jazz Chisholm Jr. homered on consecutive pitches for the Marlins.

Alec Bohm led the Phillies with a game-best four hits, including one that drove in a go-ahead run in the top of the 11th. He went 4 for 6 with three RBIs.

CUBS 16, REDS 6

CHICAGO (AP)—Ian Happ homered twice and Chicago easily overcame an early deficit to beat Cincinnati.

Cristopher Morel, Dansby Swanson and Seiya Suzuki also went deep to help push the Cubs within three games of the NL Central lead and two games back in the wild-card race.

Morel and Gomes each extended their hitting streaks to 10 games, and Michael Fulmer (2-5) pitched 1 2/3 innings of no-hit ball in relief of Drew Smyly.

Reds starter Brandon Williamson gave up five runs on four hits in 4 1/3 innings, striking out a season-high seven batters. Buck Farmer (3-5) was the loser.

MARINERS 6, RED SOX 3

SEATTLE (AP)—Julio Rodríguez hit a tiebreaking RBI single and stole home in a four-run seventh inning, leading Seattle past Boston.

Rodríguez hit a broken-bat grounder that rolled into left field when Boston shortstop Yu Chang and third baseman Rafael Devers collided while trying to field the ball, allowing Tom Murphy to score.

Eugenio Suárez followed with an RBI single to right field, giving the Mariners a two-run lead. Then, Rodriguez, on a double steal with Suárez, scored from third when Boston catcher Connor Wong threw to second base.

Jarren Duran hit a two-run homer for Boston and Mastaka Yoshida added a run-scoring infield single. Reliever John Schreiber (1-1) took the loss.

Cal Raleigh hit a two-run homer and Cade Marlowe had a pinch-hit single for Seattle.

NATIONALS 3, BREWERS 2

WASHINGTON (AP)—Corey Dickerson and Ildemaro Vargas scored on third baseman Andruw Monasterio's throwing error in the ninth inning, and Washington rallied off closer Devin Williams and beat Milwaukee for its ninth win in 11 games.

Milwaukee, which began the day a half-game behind Cincinnati in the NL Central and a game ahead of Arizona and Miami for the third and final wild-card spot, lost five of six on its road trip to Atlanta and Washington. It last won consecutive games July 19-20.

Kyle Finnegan (5-3) worked a 1-2-3 ninth for Washington. Williams (5-3) took the loss.

Tyrone Taylor hit a two-run homer in the second for Milwaukee.

CARDINALS 7, TWINS 3

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Dakota Hudson pitched seven strong innings in his second start of the season and Alex Burleson's three-run homer was one of four long balls for St. Louis in a win over AL Central-leading Minnesota.

Lars Nootbaar added a two-run homer and Tyler O'Neill and Jordan Walker added solo homers for the Cardinals, who won their third straight game.

Matt Wallner hit a three-run homer for the Twins in the seventh. It was just the second hit allowed by Hudson.

Hudson (2-0) struck out seven with three walks and one hit batter. The 28-year-old right-hander retired the first 11 batters he faced before issuing a walk in the fourth.

PADRES 11, ROCKIES 1

DENVER (AP)—Gary Sánchez homered twice and drove in four runs, Juan Soto went deep for the third time in two days and San Diego won for the fifth time in six games.

Sánchez had two of his three hits in San Diego's seven-run ninth inning.

Ha-Seong Kim homered leading off the game and Fernando Tatís Jr. hit a towering three-run homer to help the new-look Padres. San Diego traded for five players before the Tuesday deadline to help with a playoff push in the final two months of the season.

San Diego had three of its new players in uniform Wednesday—Ji Man Choi, Garrett Cooper and Scott Barlow, who relieved Ray Kerr (1-1) in the sixth inning and struck out three in 1 2/3 innings.

Kim made it 1-0 with his fourth leadoff homer and 14th of the year off of Colorado starter Kyle Freeland (4-12). Soto, who had two homers Tuesday night, hit a 449-foot blast into the second deck in right field in the third inning made it 3-0.

ROYALS 4, METS 0

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Cole Ragans pitched out of trouble for six spotless innings and Kansas City earned its fifth consecutive victory, extending its longest winning streak in more than two years.

Michael Massey hit a two-run double off rookie Kodai Senga in the first. Drew Waters homered late and threw out a runner at the plate from right field.

Called up from the minors earlier in the day, Ragans (3-3) struck out eight in his first win with the Royals. The left-hander allowed seven hits and walked one in his second start for Kansas City since being acquired June 30 from Texas.

The Royals ripped Senga for six hits over the first two innings, building a 3-0 lead. Senga (7-6) worked 5 2/3 innings, allowing three runs on a career-high 11 hits and two walks. He struck out six.

New York went 2 for 12 with runners in scoring position and stranded 10 overall while getting blanked for the 10th time this season.

TIGERS 6, PIRATES 3

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Zack Short tied a career-high with three RBIs, powering Detroit to a split of a two-game series against Pittsburgh.

Pinch-hitting for Akil Baddoo, Short capped a three-run fourth inning with a two-run single off Ryan Borucki to left that extended the Tigers' lead to 4-1. His two-out RBI double, down the left-field line past a diving Ke'Bryan Hayes at third base, made it 5-2 in the sixth.

Eduardo Rodriguez (7-7) gave up two runs on seven hits and struck out five in six innings for Detroit, which had lost six of seven.

Osvaldo Bido (2-2), who allowed four runs on three hits, started the fourth by walking Kerry Carpenter and hitting Matt Vierling. The Pittsburgh starter was then chased from the game by Javier Báez's RBI single into left that put Detroit ahead 2-1 before Borucki entered.

Jamaica reaches KO round for 1st time, eliminates Brazil

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Jamaica advanced to the knockout round for the first time following a 0-0 draw Wednesday that ended Brazil's run in the group stage for the first time since 1995 at the Women's World Cup.

The scoreless game in Melbourne also ended Brazilian great Marta's World Cup career.

She holds the all-time scoring record with 17 goals at the World Cup but couldn't add to her tally in her sixth trip to the global tournament.

After conceding 12 goals in its Women's World Cup debut in 1999, Jamaica shut out France, Panama and Brazil in consecutive games to finish second in Group F behind the French.

In addition to being ranked well below both Brazil and France, Jamaica progressed despite the financial struggles it faced before the tournament.

These difficulties resulted in Jamaica receiving support from fans through crowdfunding due to inadequate support from its federation. Nearly $100,000 was raised for the team through two fundraisers.

After opening the tournament with a 4-0 victory over Panama, Brazil failed to get the victory it needed to extend Marta's World Cup campaign.

With Marta starting the match for the first time in the group stage, Brazil maintained possession for most of the first half but struggled to test Jamaica goalkeeper Rebecca Spencer.

The second half saw Brazil lift the tempo as the team chased the goal needed to advance. Brazil recorded six shots on target but struggled to threaten Jamaica's goal as Jamaica's organized defense stifled the team throughout the game.

Marta was replaced after 80 minutes with the game still in the balance.

A free kick from Andressa and a header from Debinha in stoppage time represented Brazil's closest chance of scoring the winning goal. It was close, but close enough.

With the draw, the Reggae Girlz advance to the Round of 16 in their second Women's World Cup. The team made its debut in 2019 but lost all three group-stage matches, including a 3-0 loss to Brazil. This time, Jamaica finishes unbeaten in Group F.

Brazil's loss means it is eliminated from the Women's World Cup in the group stage for the first time since 1995. With the exit from the tournament, Marta has played her final World Cup match after announcing her plan to retire prior to the tournament. She bids farewell to the game's biggest stage as the World Cup's all-time leading scorer with 17 goals.

AP

Jamaica's Khadija Shaw, right, celebrates after the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between Jamaica and Brazil in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2023.

FRANCE 6, PANAMA 3

SYDNEY (AP) — France has had to roll with the punches at the Women's World Cup.

The No. 5-ranked team was held to a surprise draw against Jamaica in its opening game and on Wednesday had the shock of going a goal down to Panama inside two minutes.

France recovered to win 6-3 and advanced to the round of 16 atop Group F, but celebrations were muted after being pushed by another underdog.

"From the get-go the most important thing for us was to finish at the head of the group after three games," said France coach Herve Renard.

He spoke after the Jamaica game of the way in which the gap is closing in women's international soccer. And Wednesday was further evidence of that as Panama exposed France's defensive weaknesses and Jamaica held Brazil 0-0 to advance as runner-up in the group.

"There was a huge shock this evening. If we can consider this as a huge shock," Renard said. "This shows, you can see with your very own eyes, that the women's game is kicking things up a notch."

France could face two-time champion Germany in the round of 16. While that is a potentially daunting prospect, this World Cup has proven that reputations can count for little as the once-dominant nations are being seriously challenged and cut down to size.

As well as Jamaica, South Africa is another unexpected name in the knockout stage, while Colombia beat Germany 2-1 and leads Group H heading into the last match.

"I think still there's some difference with some teams, but we can see a lot of new faces in this World Cup," said Renard, adding that increased physicality in women's soccer is playing a part in leveling the playing field.

France responded to going behind to Marta Cox's 30-yard (meter) free kick by scoring five times by the 52nd minute. But it still conceded two more as Panama mounted an unlikely fightback late on.

The French had to thank Kadidiatou Diani, who scored a hat trick to put them well ahead by the time Panama came back into it.

"On a personal note it was wonderful to be able to score my first goals at a World Cup," she said. "I think I'm going to keep on the positives. We were able to score six goals.

"There are a couple of negative notes. We conceded three goals, but for me the most important thing is to hold our heads high and we've got a couple of days to work on our defensive set play."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino was part of a crowd of 40,498 at Sydney Football Stadium for one of the most thrilling games of the tournament so far.

The French only needed a draw to guarantee their place in the round of 16 for the fourth time in succession. But Renard's team was given an early scare when Cox whipped the ball into the top corner, beyond the reach of goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin to score her country's first goal at a Women's World Cup in style.

France responded impressively to that early setback by going into the break with a 4-1 lead.

SWEDEN 2, ARGENTINA 0

HAMILTON, New Zealand (AP)—Rebecka Blomqvist's second-half goal lifted Sweden to a 2-0 win over Argentina on Wednesday to advance the Blagult to a round-of-16 showdown with the United States in the Women's World Cup.

Argentina was eliminated from the tournament.

Neither side looked close to scoring for much of the match until Blomqvist broke the deadlock with a headed goal at the 66th-minute mark to help the blue and yellow finish 3-0 and win Group G.

Sweden, which rested nine starters to open the match, threatened at times in the first half. A combination of disjointed play and fouls prevented Sweden from taking early control of the game.

Playing at times in a pelting rain, Argentina did not create a real chance in open play, and suffered a blow when veteran Florencia Bonsegundo was stretchered off in tears after a late tackle by Blomqvist in the 41st minute.

Late in the match, Gabriela Chavez committed a foul while defending a corner kick. Elin Rubensson converted the penalty kick in stoppage time to seal the victory for Sweden.

Swedish captain Caroline Seeger made her 20th Women's World Cup appearance Wednesday to equal Hedvig Lindahl's tournament record for Sweden.

Over 17,900 spectators packed Waikato Stadium, which holds just 18,009. The crowd was full of Argentina supporters who sang and chanted for all 90 minutes, plus stoppage time, on a brisk night in Hamilton.

SOUTH AFRICA 3, ITALY 2

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Player of the match Hildah Magaia called the moment "life-changing." Coach Desiree Ellis flagged something deeper, though, after South Africa beat Italy 3-2 Wednesday to qualify for the round of 16 at a Women's World Cup for the first time.

South Africa had to beat eighth-ranked Italy to progress. A draw would have been enough to take Italy through. And in a turbulent final 20 minutes, both teams stood on the brink of qualifying.

The halftime score was 1-1 after Arianna Caruso's penalty and Benedetta Orsi's own goal. Magaia scored to put South Africa ahead 2-1 and left them on the brink of history, before Caruso equalized from a Cristiana Girelli corner.

At last, in the second minute of stoppage time, Magaia provided the assist for Themba Kgatlana's match-winner and South Africa was through in a moment of huge significance for women's sport in their country.

"They call me the breadwinner. So without the breadwinner, there's no bread," Magaia said. "I had to provide the bread for the nation."

"This really means a lot," she added, "especially knowing that we were so close to going home. It is an emotional one."

Magaia's comment carried literal force. In advancing to the last 16, each South Africa player will take home at least $60,000, a life-altering sum. Magaia said she now will be able to properly care for her mother.

A dispute over pay that clouded South Africa's preparation and only was resolved on the eve of the world tournament, now is well in the background, one of many trials the team had to overcome to get to the World Cup.

All of that struggle was reflected in their jubilation at fulltime. As the second half seesawed they threw everything into a last bid for victory

"I think there was a time on the line when we had five coaches and the captain giving direction, it was that tough," Ellis, the veteran coach, said. "We knew it was going to be a tough game but we knew what we were capable of.

"The girls are just freaking amazing. I mean I speak through every challenge they faced in the past," she added. "We know that no-one gave us a chance today but we knew what we were capable of and they fought like warriors out there."

South Africa qualified second out of Group G behind Sweden, which beat Argentina 2-0 in is last match Wednesday and will face the United States in the next round. The South Africans will face the Netherlands on Sunday.

In previous group matches, South Africa lost 2-1 to Sweden after leading 1-0 with a Magaia goal and drew 2-2 with Argentina after leading.

"I think this is for everyone back home," Ellis said. "You know, people getting up in the early hours of the morning who were disappointed when we should have won against Argentina. This is for everyone."

On a night of high drama and low temperatures, Caruso's 11th-minute penalty and Orsi's own goal kept it tight in the first half in Wellington, where a southerly wind dropped temperatures close to freezing and reduced the crowd to around 10,000, mostly South Africans.

Arianna Caruso's penalty in the 11th was canceled out by an own goal in the 32nd. Magaia scored in the 67th to put South Africa ahead 2-1, but Caruso equalized and momentum swung back to Italy.

At last Jermaine Seoposenwe went forward and squared the ball to midfielder Magaia who, rather than shooting, crossed to Kgatlana to strike the ball home.

The tension continued as stoppage time exceeded 11 minutes, and then it was over. Some South African players danced, many embraced. Others, Kgatlana among them, seemed too overwhelmed.

Astros reacquire Justin Verlander from Mets

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
AP SPORTS WRITER

HOUSTON (AP)—Astros owner Jim Crane texted Justin Verlander with a simple message moments after they reacquired him Tuesday from the New York Mets in a blockbuster trade.

"I said: 'Welcome back. We missed you,'" Crane said. "'We'll see you in New York. Hope you pitch well for us against the Yankees.'"

Verlander is back with Houston, rejoining the team he helped to two World Series titles, and expected to start Friday or Saturday in the Bronx.

In a tight race with Texas atop the AL West, the Astros shipped outfield prospects Drew Gilbert and Ryan Clifford to New York for the three-time Cy Young Award winner.

It turned out to be just the start of a momentous day for Houston's rotation — left-hander Framber Valdez pitched a no-hitter against Cleveland hours later.

Crane told The Associated Press the Mets could send more than $50 million to the Astros to help pay off Verlander's contract. The 40-year-old right-hander signed an $86.7 million, two-year deal with the Mets in December that includes a vesting option for 2025 at $35 million.

"(General manager) Dana (Brown) and his team worked on it hard," Crane told the AP. "After we looked at the numbers — it's always tough to give up prospects, but I think they determined that it was the right move. We needed starting pitching. He's been throwing well. And I think the other factor is they ate a lot of the contract. So it wasn't a really hard decision. It was just, would we give up enough prospects?"

The underperforming Mets dismantled the most expensive roster in major league history over the past few days. They dealt fellow ace Max Scherzer to the Texas Rangers in a trade announced Sunday and followed up Tuesday by shedding Verlander, among a flurry of other moves.

Veteran closer David Robertson, reliever Dominic Leone and outfielders Tommy Pham and Mark Canha also were sent packing since last Thursday.

Crane said he and Brown didn't think there was any chance Verlander would be traded until Scherzer was dealt. After he was moved, the Astros figured they'd be a frontrunner if the Mets wanted to trade Verlander, too.

"We knew he had (the no-trade clause) and I think we felt strongly if given the opportunity, there were only a few landing spots and we were one of them," Crane said.

Brown said once they learned the Mets were open to moving Verlander they put on a "full-court press."

"We think he stabilizes our rotation," Brown said. "We're really fired up. ... I had a chance to speak to Justin and he's very excited about coming back."

Crane believes his past relationship with the pitcher was important in making the deal.

"Justin and I always got along," Crane said. "We've had direct contact with each other on a number of things. Certainly not this one, but I know him well, and every time he was here, we did what we said we were going to do. So I think he had some trust in coming back here, certainly. And he's had great successes. So I think that certainly helped."

Verlander earned his 250th career victory on Sunday, and 61 of those came with Houston. He was first acquired from the Detroit Tigers during the 2017 season, when he helped pitch the Astros to their first World Series title.

"It gives a boost to the fans," Crane said. "It gives a boost to the locker room. I know (manager) Dusty (Baker) will be happy. So it's a big day when you have your Cy Young guy come back."

Baker couldn't quit smiling as he discussed Verlander's return Tuesday.

"It improves my heart's function, you know what I mean?" Baker said. "And for a guy who's had a stroke, heart function is very, very important. And that does my heart well."

AP

New York Mets' Justin Verlander pitches during the first inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees, Tuesday, July 25, 2023, in New York.

Verlander won his third Cy Young Award and second World Series championship with Houston last season, then became a free agent.

He opened the season on the injured list and struggled upon his return in early May. But he's been back in top form recently, going 4-1 with a 1.49 ERA in his past seven starts. He's 6-5 with a 3.15 ERA in 16 starts overall this season, striking out 81 in 94 1/3 innings.

Verlander signed a $66 million contract with the Astros in March 2019 that covered the 2020 and 2021 seasons. He was hurt on opening day of the 2020 season and made just one start in the two seasons covered by the deal before his brilliant comeback last year.

"The last contract he had was we were paying about $33 (million) and that didn't work out so good," Crane said. "But I think there was enough cushion in this one to make it palatable. And being in the position we're at right now, a little weak on the starting pitching side, he will be a big anchor in there."

The Astros have won the AL West in five of the past six seasons but currently trail the first-place Rangers by a half-game.

"It's definitely going to provide a huge boost, not only energy-wise, but also just to be able to have a guy like him in here who's been in here before. And we know how much he brings, not only to the mound but the clubhouse," third baseman Alex Bregman said.

The Astros have managed to stay close to the Rangers despite dealing with a spate of injuries, including losing starting pitchers Lance McCullers Jr. and Luis García to season-ending injuries.

"We've lost a lot of key players to injuries," Crane said. "But we're used to being there. We want to stay there. So we want to get back, win the division and get in the playoffs."

New York at one point had a projected payroll of $365 million bolstered by aggressive owner Steve Cohen, but the club entered Tuesday 50-55 and six games out of the final NL wild-card spot. Cohen paid off around $35 million remaining on Scherzer's contract to facilitate the deal with the Rangers, which returned top prospect Luisangel Acuña, the younger brother of Braves star Ronald Acuña Jr.

Gilbert, 22, was a first-round draft pick by Houston in 2022 who ranks 68th on MLB.com's Top 100 prospects list. He's a potential five-tool player who dominated at Class A early this season — hitting .360 with a 1.107 OPS in 21 games — before slumping after a promotion to Double-A. He's hitting .241 with six homers and a .713 OPS in 60 games at Double-A.

The 20-year-old Clifford was an 11th-round selection in 2022 whose stock has risen since. He's hitting .291 with 18 home runs and a .919 OPS at two A-ball stops this season.

The Mets will send Houston around $35.5 million at least, covering a majority of the remaining roughly $57.5 million Verlander is guaranteed. New York will pay around $4.2 million this year and $31.3 million in 2024.

If Verlander pitches 140 innings next year and triggers his $35 million conditional player option for 2025, the Mets would pay another $17.5 million if Verlander exercises the option.

The Mets will save around $19 million in 2023 with the trade — $10 million in salary and $9 million in lowered luxury tax payments.

IMMACULATE

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the fifth inning.

The game wasn't over yet though as the playoffs are a full nine innings and the Brewers finally put runs on the board as they closed the gap by just two runs 4-6. Franko Nakamura started their late break for runs as he hit a single, followed by an RBI single from Byron Kaipat.

Kaipat then rounded the bases after an RBI base hit by Jerome Delos Santos and was brought home by Kaipo Dikito. Dikito made the fourth run before their fire was extinguished by the Cardinals pitcher.

The Cardinals had the last laugh, however, as their pitching staff proceeded to leave the Brewers scoreless until the end of the game.

The undefeated Cardinals will try to finish off the season strong without a loss against the up-and-coming young guns of the Junior Nationals in a three-game championship series.

Catch the action next Monday, Aug. 7; Wednesday, Aug. 9; and Friday, Aug. 11, at 6:30pm at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

NICKOLE

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Khoder for the gold in a tough championship matchup.

Salem caught a knee to the nose on the way down from her takedown which caused her nose to bleed, and they had to clean her up before fighting again. Tied for third place were Avery Grace Svidergol and Pearl Rosalind McConnell.

Nickole's father, Nicko said in a Facebook post, "All the hours and tears she put in just to make it here was incredible… I reminded her how much work she put in and she started crying because it really meant that much for her."

He added, "I couldn't sleep the night before, but I put all my faith in God and asked my mom and others to help pray for her safety and that she stayed focused on all her matches. Thank you again lord… God bless everyone who supports her and will continue to support her. Nickole says she loves you all."

As for Nickole, she said in an interview that she feels "amazing. I feel more amazing than last year. Thank you to those who supported me, it has led me on a long and good path."

When asked how's her progress so far, she said "I feel even better than I did last year. What I feel good about last year was there were a lot of fights compared to this year, but I'm so proud that I won and with how I fight—I'm just so proud."

She said that last year, she won all her fights via submissions, with her wins this year a combination of submissions and points.

When asked what's next for her, Nicko said that she won't be doing any competitions for a while. "She wants to take up soccer and gymnastics for the rest of the year, but will still be training JiuJitsu at her gym," said Nicko.

Nicko is a U.S. Marine and a 2012 graduate of Saipan Southern High School, while his wife and Nickole's mother, Maria Victoria, is an alumnae of Marianas High School. They now reside in Charleston, South Carolina.

NMISF

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The Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center founder and head coach further explained.

"The width of each lane is also very important for expert swimmers. Official pool and our pool are so different. Feeling and sense of width is such a delicate issue for swimmers."

That's why Kimura couldn't help but admire CNMI swimmers' resourcefulness in training without an official pool and how fast they adapted after arriving in Japan.

"We arrived at Fukuoka many days before the World Championships this time, we repeated and repeated our training to acclimatize our body to the official pool. So yes, if we have a swimming pool here, our results will expectedly be at a higher level."

At the end of the day, Kimura said Aleksenko, Batallones, Deleon Guerrero, and Litulumar did their best, and showed their very best performance in the World Championships.

"If it would be a short course meet, we would not have much of a different situation from here. But in a long course meet, it will be an entirely different situation. Our goal remains the same. Just aim higher. Faster times, more FINA points, winning against rivals, that sort of thing."

A 50m Olympic-size swimming pool at the Oleai Sports Complex is part of the $21.2-million grant the CNMI government received from the U.S. Economic Development Administration back in 2021.

Saipan-born UOG athletes had great time in friendship tourney

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The recently concluded 2023 SBL-UOG Baseball Friendship Tournament saw skills put to the test, heated competition, and good brotherly fun bringing the islands of Guam and Saipan together.

Three players from the UOG Tritons team—Antonio Norita, Derrin Pangelinan, and Rico Seman—all Saipan natives showed off their skill on the field and soaked up the love and hospitality in their first tournament in a while back home.

Norita, a second baseman who went to UOG on a baseball scholarship last year, flew through the games with two hits and two runs scored. He said of the tourney, "The tournament was great. Weather conditions weren't too good at first but in the end, it came through. It feels great to be back home playing with and against my brothers."

When asked how he balances life, school, and baseball, he said "It was made easiest to me by having a simple routine. Having things planned out and not always making room for last-minute plans, while going to college." For those student-athletes, he said "Don't overwhelm yourself with what you think you should be doing, do what you can, and learn."

The 19-year-old said that he will be continuing his college education at NMC this fall semester and hopes to play in the league here.

Pangelinan, who moved to Guam when he was 7 or 8 years old, said the tourney for him "was an extremely fun, competitive, and eye-opening experience." He said he and Seman haven't played against Saipan teams since the last Asia-Pacific Little League regional tournament.

LEIGH GASES

Saipan-born Antonio Norita scores a run for the University of Guam Tritons during their first game in the 2023 SBL-UOG Baseball Friendship Tournament against the SBL All Stars last week at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The 24-year-old who started at UOG in 2021 said that he loves his Tritons team. "We're all very close because we've been brought together through seeking higher education and we have a lot of fun on the field. Our support staff are also very committed to making playing for UoG a memorable experience."

To the young athletes, he said "never be afraid to leave the island in pursuit of an opportunity. Some of those opportunities you'll only get one chance at and the island(s) will always have your back, so dream big and take the leap of faith.

The former U.S. Marine then thanked all the personnel involved with putting the friendship tourney together and for the baseball community showing up and giving them some competitive fire, which was very valuable to their team. He is the son of Anna Pangelinan and John San Nicolas and his stepdad is Jonathan "Kuni" Delos Santos.

Seman, who also moved to Guam at the young age of six, said that the tourney was great. "The people that took part in this event have shown great hospitality to my teammates and I. We have gratitude and high praise for them. I felt the competitiveness even though it was a friendship tournament. I did not expect anything less when playing against those teams. I definitely had some game nerves because of playing against former teammates and family, but also playing against players who I went against many times when I was on the Guam All Star team," he said.

The 23-year-old added that playing for the Tritons is great and that he could not ask for better teammates and mentors—such as his coach Roke Alcantara Jr. and team captains Larry James Flores II, Jathan Muña-Barnes, and Kyle Martinez.

As for balancing everything in his life, he said that "with the help of my family and friends, they made the task of balancing school, baseball, and life easier than it should be. Of course, school is the top priority and they make sure of that. Time management is also key. I am still working on that skill as we speak. "It is easier to run forward than to move back." That sentence has been cemented in my brain as an outfielder. No matter how difficult school, life, or even the sport you're in can get, you have to keep moving forward in order to succeed."

Rico is the son of Ramon and Juanita Seman.

These young student-athletes show their passion and hard work for the game—all while pursuing a higher education. With that, Alcantara said in an interview that these boys should not be the only ones recruited to play college ball from Saipan.

It was learned from Saipan Baseball League president Jay Santos that Alcantara is interested in recruiting players from Saipan again, just as he did with Norita last year.

Alcantara said, "We all want to offer that opportunity and then show that there's opportunity for the other kids who are inspiring to be student athletes as well. Why not? It could be for multiple people."

Santos echoed Alcantara and said that "I'm hopeful that any player from Saipan from the Junior National team or from any other team that are being recruited by UOG, that they consider not only to play baseball, but more importantly to get an education that is affordable for them and their families."

Igitol makes it 5 out of 5 races

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

If Maribel Igitol was playing America's pastime, she'd be pitching a perfect game in the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series after topping the Mama's Class of the July competition last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

That gives the 37-year-old teacher from Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School five straight wins in the five last editions of the Marianas Racing Association races.

Her 50 points last Sunday gives her 250 points for the year, which is way ahead of the 172 points of her closest pursuer, Merissa Rasa, who finished second last Sunday with 44 points. Marlybn Castro rounds up the Top 3 with 120 points.

Igitol said last Sunday's race conditions were not perfect but okay so she's happy to come out on top of both heats.

"It was a hot day. The track conditions were good. It wasn't too dusty because of the previous rainfall we had before the race."

She added that the race was exciting because the Mama's Class merged with the Novice Class.

"Merissa Rasa and I got to ride with the guys and challenged ourselves more. We actually wanted to ride with the guys since it was just the two of us racing in the Mama's Class. I want to dedicate this race to all the other moms who want to ride. We're looking to get more moms on the track and just have fun!"

The Big Boy ATV Class, meanwhile, made its long-awaited debut this year with defending champion Christian "Hollywood" Camacho reasserting his dominance with 50 points. He was followed by Henry Camacho Sr. and Greg Clark with 42 points apiece.

In the Veterans Class, Dave Celis mirrored Igitol's dominance in the division by also winning his fifth straight race for 50 points and also a perfect 250 points for the season.

Melvin Cepeda came in second with 44 points, while MRA president Charles Cepeda turned back the clock and got third place with 40 points. Melvin Cepeda is running second for the year with 194 points, while vacationing Cuki Alvarez dropped down to third with his 176 points.

Last but definitely not the least in the Expert Class, Shane Alvarez nipped Dave Celis in the second heat to win the July race. Both speedsters finished with 147 points with Ellery Cruz coming in third with 40 points.

Alvarez currently leads the division with 229 points, followed by Celis' 197 and Cuki Alvarez's 194 points.

TISHA FERRER

Maribel Igitol in action in the Mama's Class of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

Pacific Games golf tryouts start tomorrow

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Commonwealth Federation of Golf Associations will hold the first of five tryouts for the CNMI national golf team for the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands this Saturday.

The first tryout will be held at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort east course. Showtime is at 7:30am with an 8:52am tee time.

It will be followed by the second tryout two weeks later on Aug. 19 also at the Kagman golf course. Showtime is 12pm with tee time an hour later at 1pm.

The third tryout is set on Sept. 9 at the east course of the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort with an 8am showtime and a 9:13am tee time.

On Sept. 23, the fourth tryout will commence at the west course of the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort. Showtime is 7am followed by an 8:10am tee time.

A week later on Sept. 30, CFoGA will hold its fifth and final tryout and like the previous last tryout for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games, it will be done sans golf carts.

The "walking day" tryout will also be held at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort with a 7am showtime and 8am tee time.

Under the rules, caddies will be allowed to drive golf carts and

push carts/carry bags are allowed on the course.

CFoGA also laid out the qualification requirements to make the team and they are the following: Candidates must be U.S. citizens, a member of a golf association that is part of CFoGA, at least 16 years of age, and games will be played under Pacific Games qualification rules.

Successful candidates must also take part in a minimum of three out of five games to calculate the total cumulative points.

A candidate's two lowest scores and their walking game score will also determine their total cumulative score.

As already mentioned, the walking (no cart for participants) golf qualifier tryout on the final day of the qualifier is mandatory, which will be added to the minimum three games required.

The lowest two games plus walking cumulative score will determine the Top 4 men's golfers and one alternate that will make up the CNMI national golf team.

Meanwhile, the lowest three games plus walking cumulative score will determine the top women golfer that will also be part of the CNMI national golf team.

CFoGA also said one coach and one manager will be announced on the day of the CNMI national golf team's selection

For more information, call Pacific Games national team qualifiers coordinator Kaegel Taitano at (670) 789-2102.

ANDO AGULTO

CNMI national player J.J. Atalig hits a golf ball during last year's Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 at the Coral Ocean Resort.

Acuña, Riley and Olson homer as Braves rout Angels, 12-5.

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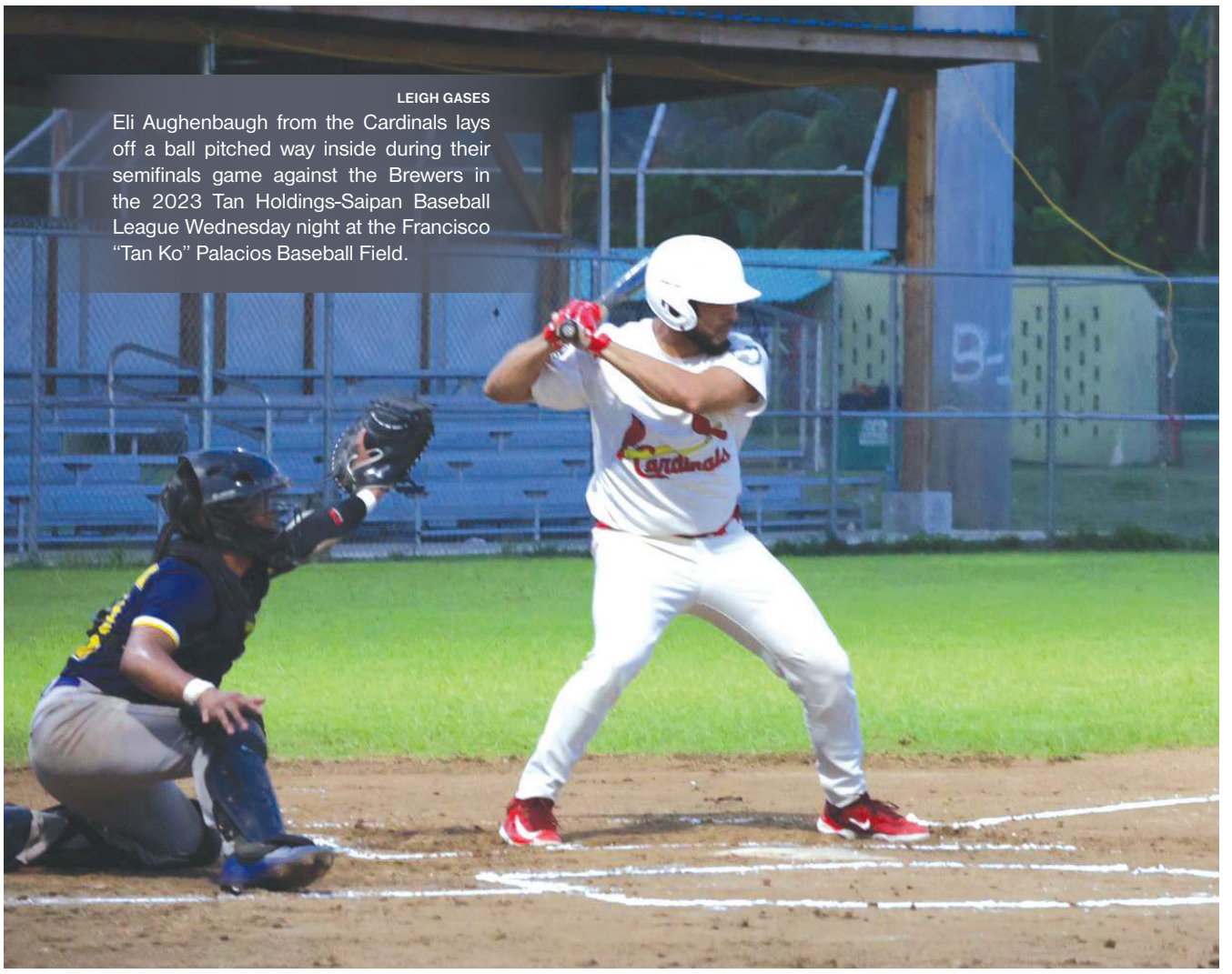
Immaculate Cardinals advance to finals



LEIGH GASES
Eli Aughenbaugh from the Cardinals lays off a ball pitched way inside during their semifinals game against the Brewers in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The immaculate season of the Cardinals has been extended as they have secured the last finals spot after defeating the Brewers, 7-4, in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League on Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The Cardinals struck first and put up two runs quickly as Nokki Saralu hit a single, followed by a base on ball to Nate Camacho. They both came home on a two RBI base hit by Gerald Cabrera. Brian Camacho then hit a single but was left on base as three outs were made.

Two more runs by way of Pat Tenorio and Keoni Kaipat came in the second inning to make it a 4-0 game.

At this point, the Brewers have yet to score as they left three batters on base with no result, and were consecutively shut down in the next three innings.

The Cardinals added some insurance as they brought home two more runs for a 6-0 lead in

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NMISF hopeful of new pool at Oleai

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

On the heels of the CNMI national swimming team's exceptional performance in last week's 20th FINA World Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, the Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation is optimistic that more records would fall once a swimming pool is built at the Oleai Sports Complex.

"There is no doubt that our swimmers would be doing better if they had a training venue that met even the most basic standards. Our swimmers need to have the proper pool conditions which includes a 50m length, ability to do turns, and a starting block entry. Practicing with these pool features is critical to improving their overall performance. Hopefully we'll see a new pool at the Oleai Sports Complex in the near future," said NMISF vice president John Hirsh.

Hirsh was part of the CNMI delegation to the short course World Aquatics Championships in Japan along with swimmers Isaiah Aleksenko, Jakey Deleon Guerrero, Maria Batallones, and Shoko Litulumar. Hiroyuki Kimura served as head coach, while Christian Villacrusis was his able lieutenant.

In all, 12 new records were set by the swimming team. Aleksenko reset both age group and national records in the 50m and 100m backstroke and 50m and 100m butterfly, while Batallones is now the 15-16 and national record-holder in the 50m breaststroke.

Aleksenko, Batallones, Deleon Guerrero, and Litulumar also combined to obliterate the national record in the 100mx4 mixed medley relay and 100mx4 mixed free relay.

"Our swimmers did very well with several personal best times, age group and national records. It's always exciting that our NMI swimmers are able to compete with the world's best. I know it's inspirational for them! While they may not be competing with them in the same heats, all swimmers warm up together in the same pool and this is very exciting and motivating," added Hirsh.

Kimura, for his part, said having no actual swimming pool to train in is really a big disadvantage for the CNMI's national swimming team.

"In our situation here because there is no swimming pool, almost everything becomes different. Just one example, the depth. Expert swimmers go deep after a turn because it is faster. However our pool is not deep enough.It means we cannot properly train even the basic turn action here."

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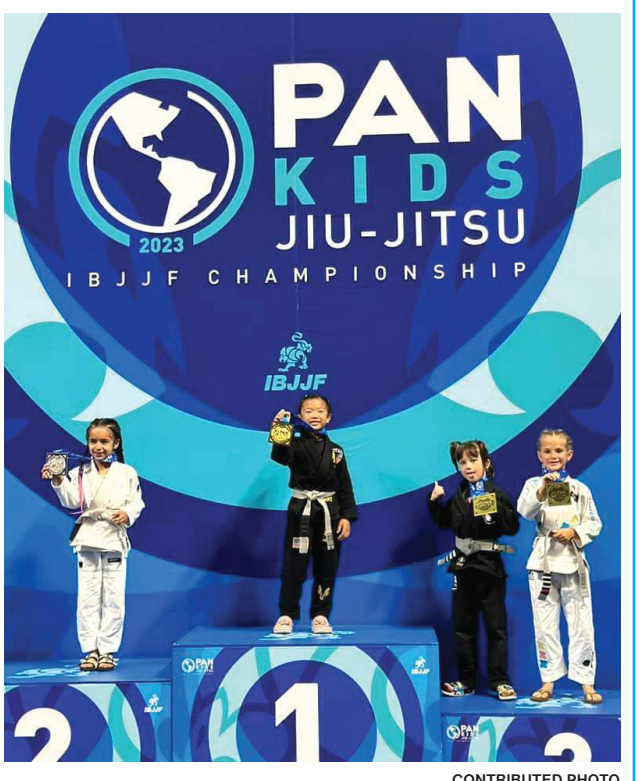
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh, center, poses, from left, assistant coach Christian Villacrusis, Jakey Deleon Guerrero, Maria Batallones, Shoko Litulumar, Isaiah Aleksenko, and head coach Hiroyuki Kimura during the final day of competition in the FINA World Championships in Fukuoka, Japan

Nickole wins gold in 2023 Pan Kids JiuJitsu Championship



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Nickole Salem, center, is the 2023 Pan Kids JiuJitsu IBJJF Champion in her division after the championship round last July 23 in Kissimmee, Florida.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nickole Salem, after recently armbarring her way to gold in the IBJJF Kid's American National Championships 2023, is also now a champion in the 2023 Pan Kids JiuJitsu IBJJF Championships last July 23 in Kissimmee, Florida.

The 6-year-old Brazilian Jiu Jitsu prodigy, who is currently ranked No. 3 in the world in her category, went up against some of the best children in jiu-jitsu.

In the Pee-Wee 1, Featherweight 53-lb. gray belt division, Salem beat out Madison Ana

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